

THE  
NEW LIGHT ON IMMORTALITY



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THE  
NEW LIGHT ON IMMORTALITY  
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OR

*The Significance of Psychic Research*

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BY

JOHN HERMAN RANDALL  
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New York

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## FOREWORD

WHEN we remember that every year thirty-one and a half millions of human beings pass through the experience we call death, that every three years a number greater than the entire population of the United States leave this world for the "Great Beyond," that in the span of a single life of four score years, the inconceivable number — two billion four hundred million fellow human creatures of the planet earth — will have passed from out the reach of time and sense, that the one inevitable experience awaiting, sooner or later, every individual being, is death — how indeed can any thoughtful mind fail to pause and reflect?

There is no experience so common and universal as death, unless it be birth, and yet how little we know as to its real meaning. What question, by comparison, can rank in significance with this supreme question of man's destiny? In its essence it has to do with nothing less than the value of a human soul. Is the soul nothing, or is it everything? Is it of infinitesimal worth, or is it infinite? Let this age-old question be answered definitely in the affirmative and the sociological problem is solved forever. No man would willingly or consciously grind precious jewels into the dust. If the human life is not an immortal soul in evolution, the sooner we know it the better.

If any excuse for another book on the old subject is needed, let it be found in the fact that the instinctive cry of the human soul for more light on the great mystery is more insistent and more general to-day than ever before; and also, that we are living in an age that professes to have found new light on the



old problem that its discoverers claim is destined to dispel the shadows and fill the whole world with light. Psychic research is a name to conjure by to-day. Already it has done great things, and it promises to do still greater. The demand is for certainty. The soul-hunger for more light is one of the striking characteristics of our day. Back of all the natural curiosity that impels toward the probing of the old mystery by new methods, lies an inarticulate but earnest longing for a richer fuller, truer life of the spirit. What might it not mean for the world, if man should indeed find the deeper answer to his spiritual yearnings and aspirations in what purports to be "new light" on the old problem?

The author is not a psychic researcher, though he has been in deepest sympathy with the work being done in this field, and has sought to keep in close touch with its results. He does not intend to relate any personal experiences he may have had with psychic phenomena, nor does he purpose bringing to the attention of the reader any detailed evidence that may have been obtained for the fact of human survival. The books that deal with these phases of the subject are numerous and can be found by any one.

What he rather seeks to do in this volume is to appraise the work of the researcher, so far as it has gone, not as the scientific expert might do in an exhaustive or technical manner, but as a general student of the subject who realizes that many men and women are still in doubt as to just what psychic research really means, what it is trying to do, and how much has already been accomplished.

Still more particularly does he desire to point out, as clearly as possible, the deeper meaning and significance of psychic research for this problematic age, with all its confusion and uncertainty in every domain of life and thought, — a phase of the subject that he feels has not yet been sufficiently stressed or adequately set forth by previous writers.

## FOREWORD

vii

He desires to acknowledge his indebtedness, especially, to the writings of the four researchers to whom he has given prominence in this volume, and to the books of Doctor Hyslop for the historical matter.

JOHN HERMAN RANDALL.

New York City,  
September 1st, 1920.



# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
FOREWORD . . . . .	v
I THE NATURE OF THE NEW LIGHT . . . . .	1
II MAURICE MAETERLINCK — THE POET . . . . .	14
III WILLIAM JAMES — THE PHILOSOPHER . . . . .	33
IV SIR OLIVER LODGE — THE SCIENTIST . . . . .	51
V JAMES HERVEY HYSLOP — THE PSYCHOLOGIST . . . . .	68
VI THE PRESENT STATUS OF PSYCHIC RESEARCH . . . . .	85
VII FUTURE POSSIBILITIES — AND A WARNING . . . . .	100
VIII THE AGE AND PSYCHIC RESEARCH . . . . .	118
IX ITS ETHICAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS . . . . .	129
X ITS MEANING FOR RELIGION . . . . .	140
XI THE REAL IMMORTALITY . . . . .	149
XII THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF IMMORTALITY . . . . .	164

# THE NEW LIGHT ON IMMORTALITY

## CHAPTER I

### THE NATURE OF THE NEW LIGHT

"Year after year the researches of science afford us new proof that the savage, the barbarian, the idolater, the monk, each and all have arrived, by different paths, as near to some one point of eternal truth as any thinker of the nineteenth century. . . . We have reason even to suppose that no dream of the invisible world has ever been dreamed,—that no hypothesis of the unseen has ever been imagined,—which future science will not prove to have contained some germ of reality."—*Lafcadio Hearn*.

WHEN we speak of the "new light" on immortality to-day, we are referring to a very definite and specific class of evidence that professes to be scientific and that claims, at least in the minds of many, to furnish tangible proof of human survival after death. It has nothing whatever to do with the older or classical arguments for immortality, save as these have served to keep alive belief in continued existence or may have stimulated interest in the search for evidence that would be truly convincing. The familiar arguments that have come down to us from the past are so numerous and, to certain minds, so strong, that it is difficult to select those that have exerted the greatest influence on the human mind.

These older arguments may, perhaps, best be grouped under the following general heads: First, what may be termed an ethnographic or race argument, based on the universality



of the belief in an after existence among practically all people and at all epochs of history, even in prehistoric times. This is what the old traditional philosopher called "the proof from universal consent." Second, there is the psychological argument, based on man's instinctive aspiration toward the ideal,—the ideal of beauty, or of truth, or of goodness. But since this ideal never is, and never can be attained in this earthly life, therefore there must be another life where it can be realized; otherwise man's deepest aspirations are but baseless delusions and cruelest mockery. Third, there is the metaphysical argument, which has taken many different forms, the most familiar of which is based on the idea that while the body is composite and corruptible, the soul is simple and hence decomposable — a part or fragment of Infinite Being or Universal Substance. Therefore, after the terrestrial life is terminated, the soul must continue to live on, as nothing that is a part of indestructible Substance can ever be lost or destroyed. Fourth, there is the moral argument which claims that it is indispensably just that the virtuous man should be recompensed for his struggles and that the guilty man should be punished. But since this is far from being observed in this life, the sense of justice, the thirst for a rigorous and absolute equity, would not be satisfied unless there were a supplement to this life after death. And last, there are the familiar arguments from religion. Which of these arguments carries greatest weight depends, of course, upon the mental and moral temper of each individual.

It is quite evident that no one of these arguments, nor all of them taken together, furnish conclusive or final proof of life after death. What they do is to make continued existence seem reasonable or probable even, the influence they have varying with the individual who considers them. These are the reasons that underlie the beliefs of the vast majority

of human beings in life after death, in so far as any reasons are recognized. That they have served to bring conviction to many minds in the past cannot be questioned, that they have furnished, at least, some degree of comfort and hope to countless others must also be admitted. But it is equally true to-day that these arguments, taken alone, leave multitudes in an attitude of doubt and uncertainty, and not a few in a position of frankly confessed unbelief in any existence beyond the grave. The reason for this is due to the fact that we are living in a scientific age, which seeks to base all its conclusions not on conjecture or faith, but on facts, just so far as these can be discovered. And the demand of such an age, in religion as well as everywhere else, is for certainty, not for mere pious conjecture or an only imaginary hope. If we are to believe to-day, the demand is for clear evidence that our beliefs are founded on facts, not on delusions. It is this scientific spirit that makes imperative and inevitable a new approach to all the old problems of life, including those of religion, and that demands new grounds upon which a more truly satisfying faith can be based.

This new approach to the old problem of life after death has been found in the so-called field of psychic research. The workers in this field do not deny the value of the older arguments, but in their special inquiry they are not concerned with them. They do not reason philosophically, or religiously, or morally, or from universal instinct, but they profess to argue scientifically. The question they ask is, not what have men thought and believed and hoped in the past, but what are the clear and unmistakable facts as to continued existence after death? And they believe that in the realm of psychic phenomena it is possible for them to discover facts that may have a direct bearing on the old problem. Some of them even affirm their conviction that they have gone far enough in the



ascertaining of facts to claim confidently that they have already discovered the scientific proof of human survival, and that eventually all the world will accept the proof.

Such assertions made by such men, would have been startling, to say the least, a generation ago; and no one can deny the profound significance and far-reaching implications that they may contain for the future. The time is past when intelligent people can brush the evidence of psychic research aside as being "all bosh," although there are some who still hold this view. The research in this field has been carried so far and has already disclosed so many significant facts that it must be continued, in spite of all hostility, until the truth of these facts is finally known.

A brief survey of the movement known as psychic research may not only be of interest to the reader; it may also help to disclose how serious is the purpose and how disinterested are the motives lying back of the efforts of the investigators in this particular field.

Psychic phenomena are as old as antiquity. They have always been in the world and are found among all people. Tylor's "Primitive Culture," Herbert Spencer's works, Frazer's "Belief in Immortality among Savages," and many similar works, as well as the legends of folk-lore, bear abundant testimony to the existence of genuine psychic phenomena in the earliest times, making all due allowance for magic, fraud, hysteria and morbid conditions. Dreams and sorcery seem to have been the chief forms of manifestation. The Hebrew Scriptures are full of evidence of psychic phenomena, and the origin of Christianity was associated with the same phenomena to a marked degree. The story of the transfiguration, and the appearance of Moses and Elias on the Mount, are only conspicuous instances among many to be found in the New Testament. The same thing is true of all religions, at least in their earlier stages. Limits of space forbid our



tracing the manifestations of psychic phenomena down through the centuries, as the books dealing with this phase of the subject are easily accessible to all.

The rise of modern spiritualism is usually associated with the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York, though Professor Hyslop regards Swedenborg who died in 1772 as the real originator. His phenomena were not physical, but of the mental type, consisting of visions with his own interpretations of them. The interest in spiritualism after the time of Swedenborg was kept alive by the performance of Mesmer and by the investigators who followed him. Mesmer excited great interest in France and, to a lesser degree, in England. But on the whole, at least in so far as public or literary notice is concerned, spiritualism made little headway in England until after the phenomena of the Fox sisters in America became generally known. Curious as it may seem, it was the rappings of the Fox sisters that created a world-wide interest in the facts of psychic phenomena — an interest that soon led to the founding of a new religious movement, founded on communications with the dead, that grew rapidly in numbers both in this country and in England.

It was this new interest in such phenomena, occasioned by the rise and growth of the Spiritualist Movement, that finally compelled the attention of scientific men. The phenomena might possibly have remained unnoticed much longer, had it not been for their occurrence in respectable families, and sometimes among men and women of marked intelligence and training. At last, however, a few men concluded that it was the scandal of science that the allegations of centuries had not been taken up and investigated. The persistence of the phenomena, and of the claims for the super-normal, was a perpetual challenge to science; at last this challenge was accepted.

John Addington Symonds states in his letters, with a half

sneer at the folly of it, that Professor Sidgwick of Cambridge University was investigating mediums as early as 1867 with the hope of finding evidence of survival after death. This date was fifteen years before the organization of the Society for Psychical Research.

The experiences of the Reverend W. Stainton Moses, who had been educated at Oxford University and was for a long time a clergyman of the Church of England, were among the chief incentives to the formation of the society. These experiences seemed to be confirmed by other remarkable incidents among intelligent people, like Lord Brougham, Cotter Morrison, Andrew Lang and Sir William Crookes. Stainton Moses was persuaded by members of his congregation to investigate spiritualism. He found nothing at first, but he finally developed automatic writing himself, and became convinced by it that the claims of the spiritualist were correct. His unquestioned integrity left intelligent people no choice but to investigate the matter. He was personally known to Professor Sidgwick, Mr. Myers, Edmund Gurney and others of the same standing. With his case and others challenging science, the men just named organized, in 1882, the English Society for Psychical Research, and obtained at once the co-operation of other prominent men. Sir William F. Barrett was one of the chief instigators in the matter, as he had long been independently interested in the study of the phenomena. He became one of the Vice Presidents in the organization, Professor Henry Sidgwick being the President. Professor Balfour Stewart was also one of the Vice Presidents. With them were associated Arthur James Balfour, M.P., Richard Hutton, and the Honorable Roden Noël. The Council of the Society was composed of Frederick W. H. Myers, Edmund Gurney, Frank Podmore, Charles C. Massey, and others not so well known in America. These names guaranteed a scientific treatment of the subject.



A draft of the purposes of the Society was published as a circular; the objects of study included phenomena purporting to represent the influence of "one mind on another, apart from any generally recognized mode of perception" (afterward called telepathy), hypnotism, clairvoyance, the experiments of Reichenbach, apparitions, haunted houses, the physical phenomena of spiritualism, and the collecting of existing materials bearing on the history of these subjects. The publications of the Society have consisted of a Journal issued monthly, and a volume of "Proceedings" issued annually, often in parts distributed throughout the year.

In 1884, two years after the organization of the English Society, an American Society was formed, with Mr. N. D. C. Hodges as secretary. Professor Simon Newcomb was its first President. Its Vice Presidents were G. Stanley Hall, now President of Clark University, Professor George S. Fullerton of the University of Pennsylvania, Professor Edward C. Pickering of the Harvard College Observatory, Dr. Henry P. Bowditch of the Harvard Medical School and Dr. Charles S. Minot, also of the Harvard Medical School. The society had on its membership list a large number of scientific men. It issued annual reports which, in the course of five years, made a volume. But in 1887, the interest having somewhat declined — perhaps because the public did not find the expected progress made — the American Society was abandoned and reorganized as an American Branch of the English Society. Dr. Richard Hodgson of London, England, was elected secretary and continued in that office until his death in 1905. After his death the American Branch was dissolved and the new American Society was organized with Dr. James H. Hyslop as secretary in May, 1906, which position he continued to occupy until his death in 1920.

There are organizations of some sort in both France and Italy under the auspices of scientific men, but no details are

known to the author. The psychological Institute in Paris was founded to include psychical research in its field of inquiry.

As its first work, the American Society undertook experiments in telepathy or thought transference with some success. In the course of several years of investigation, two types of phenomena, with perhaps a third, made something like telepathy seem plausible. These were *spontaneous* coincidences between two persons' thought, and *experimental* coincidences, in which the conditions of the result could be regulated and the phenomena repeated more or less at will. The third type consisted of apparitions. Since these naturally suggested the agency of spirits, believers in telepathy were interested in attempting to prove the adequacy of that process as an explanation.

The Society then began to investigate phantasms or apparitions. The two volumes published on that subject, together with the volume entitled, "A Census of Hallucinations," announced the unanimous conclusion of the Committee that these apparitions were not due to chance. The Committee regarded this conclusion as proved, regardless of the explanation, which many assumed to be telepathy. As the census was limited to phantasms of the living or of persons at the moment of death, the hypothesis had its plausibility. Apparitions of the dead were not considered in this report.

The further study of mediumistic phenomena seemed to strengthen the case of the spiritualists. Soon after the announcement of the conclusions regarding telepathy and apparitions, the Society discovered Mrs. Piper, through Professor William James, who had reported on her phenomena as early as 1885. In 1887 Dr. Richard Hodgson became acquainted with the case. In the course of eighteen years of work with Mrs. Piper he, together with some other members



of the Society, became convinced of the truth of the spiritistic theory. After Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Verrall, Mrs. Holland and others exhibited the same type of phenomena. The American Society has investigated Mrs. Smead, Mrs. Quentin, Mrs. Chenoweth and a few others. There seems to be little doubt left, whatever the explanation, that super-normal information has been obtained through them.

In the meantime other fields of inquiry were opened. The English Society unsuccessfully tried to repeat the experiments of Reichenbach. Sir William Barrett spent much time in investigating dousing, and issued two reports, in which he announced the conclusion that the finding of water by the divining-rod is possible. Hypnotic phenomena were to some extent investigated, particularly with a view to inducing conditions for proving telepathy. Some remarkable experiments were performed by Edmund Gurney. In the course of thirty years of work the Society collected an immense amount of data, which leaves the scientist of to-day no excuse for ignoring the claims of psychic phenomena as revealing a super-normal element in human experience.

The American Society has been handicapped in its work by the need of funds and a laboratory for scientific work, and of coöperators in the field. Under the leadership of Dr. Hyslop, it has succeeded in raising an endowment of \$160,000, for its work, but the income from this, together with membership fees, guarantees only its publications and the running expenses of its office. It has made no experiments in telepathy, and has had only limited opportunity to investigate spontaneous phenomena. But it has managed to do some good work in the mediumistic field, and maintains its Journal and "Proceedings" with such material as it can secure from personal reports and the experiments with a few psychics. It has not yet exercised any such influence over the general public as has



the English Society. Academic and scientific support, probably on account of the avowed spiritistic sympathies of its secretary, has been weak.

After calling attention to the above facts, Dr. Hyslop states the presents conditions and outlook of the American Society, shortly before his death, in the following words:

"The work of the Society, however, is well established, and probably in the future will not be neglected. Enough has been accomplished to make scientific neglect of the problem inexcusable, although much work remains to be done, to overcome the prejudices of our materialistic age. When the fact is commonly recognized that psychic research is concerned not with a metaphysical theory, but with the collection of facts which may establish a great truth, the present bias of the scientific world will be overcome. The Societies have done much to further this progress; and it is probable that the immediate future will see the barriers of prejudice broken down, with the serious investigation of questions more far reaching than those in any field of physical science."

It is through the work of these Societies that the new approach to the old problem of life after death has been opened up to humanity. For the first time in human history, strange as it may seem, these phenomena which have always had their place in the life of man are being seriously and honestly investigated by trained scientific experts, whose work is becoming more and more widely known throughout the civilized world and whose efforts to find the truth in this particularly difficult field are increasingly commanding the respect of intelligent people everywhere. When we remember the unpopularity of this work, at least in scientific circles generally, the absence of any emoluments and the little honor as yet accorded to the worker in this field, we cannot but be grateful to all those, who, in the disinterested love of truth, have devoted time and energy to the investigation of psychic phe-

nomena, whatever may be the final conclusions at which they arrive.

It is not the purpose of the author to tell of the many experiments that have been made, to describe "experiences," or to detail the evidence that has been obtained by pursuing different lines of inquiry or following different methods of investigation. All this material can be found in the books published by the trained worker in this special field, to which class the author does not belong. But he has been a close student of the results of psychic research as thus far obtained, and he is tremendously interested in the deep significance both of the inquiry and the results, on the life of man and the future of human society. It is to this significance that he desires to call attention, for it is quite evident that in the widespread interest in psychic investigations to-day and its general popularity among all classes, the deeper significance of human survival and of immortality may be lost sight of by many.

As a preparation to the consideration of this deeper significance of the subject, it is desired to make a careful study in the next few chapters of four of the outstanding figures in this field of research — Maurice Maeterlinck, William James, Sir Oliver Lodge and James Hervey Hyslop. These particular men are selected, not because they are the only voices speaking to-day for psychic research — this is by no means true — but rather, because they have come to be better known to the public mind, both by their writings and their lectures, than most of the other researchers of note. They are also selected because their general standing in the world of scholarship and of letters, as well as their personal characters, give to any opinion they may publicly express a certain weight and distinction that is not so generally accorded to all opinions. This is not to say that the personal experience of the most obscure farmer's wife in the matter of psychic phenomena may not be just as true and mean as much to her as an



experience that has come to any of these men. But the fact is, it would not mean as much to the rest of us, nor would it begin to carry the influence with us that the same experience does, when coming from the lips or pen of men whose ability we know and respect.

Another reason for this particular selection is the fact that each of these distinguished men approaches the subject from a slightly different view-point. As poet, as philosopher, as scientist and as psychologist, these four men have reacted to their investigations in the psychic field according to the peculiar temperament and mental make-up of each individual. In addition, while they are agreed in many things, they arrive at different conclusions as we shall see.

It is not our purpose to give in detail any of the particular evidence that has led them to their respective conclusions, or to describe the interesting experiences they have each had in making their investigations. All this material may readily be found in their published books and writings on the subject, and it is assumed that the reader is more or less familiar with these books.

What the author desires to do is to describe the man, in each instance, in his personal mental and spiritual approach to the subject, to give his impressions of the value of psychic investigations as bearing on the moral and spiritual life of man, and of the possibilities of finding in this field the proof for human survival; and then to set forth, as clearly and concisely as possible, the actual conclusions to which long years of research in this particular field have led each of these investigators. These men are being quoted and misquoted so widely to-day, and by persons who have never taken the trouble to read their books, that it seems well worth while to pause and inquire just what the actual conclusions of these four researchers really are. With this end in view, the author has sought purposely to give these conclusions, so far as possible,

in the actual words of the man himself, as taken from his published writings. In some cases, where it is impractical to quote direct on account of the limits of space, the author has tried to paraphrase the writer's thought as accurately as lies within his power.

It is hoped that the deeper significance of the "new light" may become more apparent, as we come to realize clearly just what its significance has become to these representative minds.



## CHAPTER II

### MAURICE MAETERLINCK — THE POET

"Earth does not possess the truth any more than we do. She seeks it, as do we, and discovers it no more readily. She seems to know no more than we whither she is going or whither she is being led by that which leads all things. We must not listen to her without inquiry; and we need not distress ourselves or despair because we are not of her opinion. We are not dealing with an infallible and unchangeable wisdom, to oppose which in our thoughts would be madness. We are actually proving to her that it is she who is in fault; that man's reason for existence is loftier than that which she provisionally assigned to him; that he is already outstripping all that she foresaw; and that she does wrong to delay his advance."—*Maurice Maeterlinck*.

WHEN the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Maurice Maeterlinck, the Belgian writer, in 1911, there was a singular feeling of unanimity, both among the literary critics and the reading public generally, that the award was well-deserved. For thirty years Maeterlinck has been writing poems, plays and essays that have been translated into many different languages. In all the western countries, his plays have been produced, usually with great success. In Russia, there were no less than 59 different companies producing "The Blue Bird" at one time; and there is scarcely a town or even hamlet throughout the western world where his essays are not known and loved.

The absurd and wholly inaccurate praise with which Mirbeau, the French critic, hailed him as the "Belgian Shakespeare," on the appearance of his early play, "Princess Madeleine," did not serve to turn the head of the young writer,



nor did it prevent him from pursuing the even tenor of his way in giving expression to the truth and beauty that shone for him, in his own inimitable style. It would be far more accurate to call him the Belgian Emerson, for there is much in common between him and the American transcendentalist, of whom he is a profound admirer.

But despite the wide popularity of his writings, there is a sense in which Maeterlinck stands as a somewhat lonely figure in this modern age. For, in a period of human history that is dominated by the objective side of life, he would emphasize the subjective; in an age absorbed by externals, he would point the way to the inner life; in an age noisy and clamorous with discussions and controversies of every kind, he would commend us to silence; in an age dedicated to social problems, he would have us remember the individual.

And yet it is the individual, not as an end in himself, but as an integral part of a larger Whole, in whom Maeterlinck is most interested. He holds no brief for the narrow, self-centered and isolated individualism that has held the world in bondage from the beginning, and from which mankind is striving so strenuously to escape to-day. But he discerns most clearly the soul of that higher individualism which must forever hold its conscious place in the life of man, if society is to make any real progress, when he reminds us that "before we do for others, we must learn to do for ourselves; before we give, we must acquire; before we act, we must learn how to be." Maeterlinck stands as one of the modern Prophets of Democracy, but not in any superficial or conventional sense. He has grasped with Emerson and Walt Whitman the idea of the democracy of all of life, he sees that the lives and energies of all men are equably penetrated by the powers of nature, and so he understands that democracy must first become an inner thing before it can become externalized in society; he knows that it must be an actual experience in

human consciousness before it can ever be realized outwardly in its fullness.

Maeterlinck has been called "the Poet of the New Mysticism," and there can be no question but that his writings proceed from a profound mystic sense. But in what does his mysticism consist? He has saturated himself in the lives and writings of the great mystics of the past,— Marcus Aurelius, Plotinus, Jacob Boehme, Novalis, George Fox, and all the rest,— and he has studied deeply the mystics of the far East; and yet there is a striking absence in his books of those strange accounts of voices and illuminations, of ecstasies and inspirations, with which the classic literature of mysticism abounds. There is a curious reserve, an entire absence of dogmatism, a certain humility in the expression of convictions, a candid and sincere spirit of unbiassed inquiry, that mark him out as the scientist imbued with the scientific spirit, as well as the poet imbued with the spirit of mysticism. It is an unusual combination of gifts; and in Maeterlinck, the mystic sense and the scientific spirit seem blended in a rare balance. His "Life of the Bee" is a fine example of a scientific-poetic treatment of a subject, in which the two tendencies seem merged into one.

At bottom, the mysticism of Maeterlinck consists of a recognition of the supremacy of the inner life; this involves the priority of consciousness and the central place held by the intuition. This is, essentially, the fundamental basis of all mysticism. The chief difference between Maeterlinck and the others who voice the new mysticism generally, and the mystics of the past, lies in the fact that the modern approach to the study of the inner life is by scientific methods and in the scientific spirit. Thus Maeterlinck might be called an empirical mystic, in the sense that he seeks to apply empirical methods to his investigation of the phenomena of the inner life. In the case of Maeterlinck, it is clear that mysticism



has been for him no mere way of escape,— a refuge from the negations of science; rather does it seem to be the fulfillment of hints and suggestions and promises made by science, the rounding out and completion of the edifice whose foundation science has laid.

We have dwelt thus at length on Maeterlinck's mental and spiritual predispositions only to indicate clearly that the views of immortality to which he eventually gives expression are essentially those of the intuitive poet, who has caught the scientific spirit and seeks to employ, so far as possible, empirical methods in his investigations.

Maeterlinck's interest in the subject of death and all that it involves is evident from the very beginning of his career as a writer. In his first volume of poems, published when he was only twenty-five, there is clearly felt the brooding sense of the mystery of existence, which tends to induce in the reader the feelings of hopeless pessimism. As he turns to the writing of plays, the mystery of death seems to assume an even more prominent place in his thought. In three of his earlier plays this is the sole theme. They are one act, no-plot pieces,—“The Intruder,” “The Interior,” and “The Blind”—scarcely adapted for general public production; but those who have been permitted to witness them upon the stage bear eloquent testimony to their tremendous dramatic power, even though the action is entirely psychological.

In each of these plays, death is always “the intruder,”— a strange, inexplicable Power, forever lurking just beyond the threshold, within the shadows, imminent, threatening, relentless, only waiting for the fateful hour when it shall emerge from the shadows to become the grim destroyer of joy, of happiness and of love,— a something terrible, abnormal, hostile to life, always the unwelcome Intruder whose presence completely baffles human understanding. In “The Death of Tintagilles,” the thought of the imminent Intruder has be-

come well-nigh an obsession, which, Maeterlinck confesses, led him for a time to indulge in various abnormal and distorted views of life, whose only meaning seemed to him to be obliterated by the presence of the Eternal Intruder. It is clear that at this stage Maeterlinck is dominated by the ancient view that death is the enemy and destroyer of life.

After his marriage to Georgette LeBlanc, with the coming of love and its consequent happiness, and also we may assume, with the steadily increasing fame and success attendant upon his writings, Maeterlinck seems to have passed out of the stage where the mystery and imminence of death was the all-important fact. His plays assume wider proportions and deal with other themes. It is then that the first volumes of his essays begin to appear,—“The Treasure of the Humble,” “Wisdom and Destiny,” “The Life of the Bee,” “The Buried Temple,” “The Double Garden,” etc., in which the gentle philosopher, with words of deep moral insight and clear spiritual vision, became even more widely known among thoughtful readers.

The old obsession of death as the grim intruder upon life now gives way to an absorption in the meaning and possibilities of life itself. The mystery remains, but it is from henceforth the mystery of life, of which the experience of death is only a part and, perhaps, a beneficial part. And it is no longer for Maeterlinck a mystery that terrifies; it may baffle him still, but in the very baffling there is a wondrous fascination.

It is now that Maeterlinck turns more definitely toward the study of psychic phenomena, not only because of his interest in the old problem of death, but because he realizes that we shall never be able to discover more definite information as to what lies beyond death, until we have learned more of the nature and possibilities of the inner self, as it is here and now incarnate in the flesh. In the volume of essays, entitled,



"The Unknown Guest," he deals with the phenomena of the sub-conscious life, suggesting its significance for the nature and powers of the inner self,—the Unknown Guest who abides deep within every life.

In this volume and also in "Our Eternity," and in "The Wrack of the Storm," are to be found his most direct utterances growing out of his extensive studies in the field of psychic phenomena. He has been for years not only a personal investigator in this field but he is also thoroughly familiar with the work done by others in England, in America and on the continent. We must also keep in mind the peculiar mental and spiritual equipment he brings to these special problems. He is essentially the poet, possessed of strong intuitive powers, but also trained in the scientific method and imbued with the scientific spirit. In addition, he is the philosopher seeking for a rational and comprehensive view of the meaning of life. As he tells us, from the outset, he has had no particular theories to defend and no special prejudices to overcome. In all that he has written on the subject, one cannot fail to be impressed with the candor, the open-mindedness and the transparent sincerity of the man.

To what conclusions have the researches of such a man led? What "new light" has he to throw on the old problem? What is his present attitude toward death and the future destiny of man, after all these years of painstaking investigation?

As to the *genuineness* of the phenomena with which psychic research deals, Maeterlinck has no question whatsoever. To quote: "The questions of fraud and imposture are naturally the first that suggest themselves when we begin the study of these phenomena. But the slightest acquaintance with the life, habits and proceedings of the three or four leading mediums is enough to remove even the faintest shadow of suspicion. Of all the explanations conceivable, the one which at-

tributes everything to imposture and trickery is unquestionably the most extraordinary and the least probable. . . . From the moment that one enters upon this study, all suspicions are dispelled without leaving a trace behind them; and we are soon convinced that the key to the riddle is not to be found in imposture. . . . Less than fifty years ago most of the hypnotic phenomena, which are now scientifically classified, were likewise looked upon as fraudulent. It seems that man is loth to admit that there lie within him many more things than he imagined."

But in regard to the *interpretation* of these facts whose genuineness Maeterlinck asserts so unquestionably, there is not the same positiveness. The crucial problem is whether these alleged facts are to be interpreted by telepathy or on some spiritualistic hypothesis. It is here that Maeterlinck frankly confesses his uncertainty. In a chapter entitled "Communications with the Dead," after quoting at length several interesting experiences vouched for by prominent investigators, he concludes as follows, "What are we to think of all this? Must we, with Myers, Newbold, Hyslop, Hodgson and many others who have studied this problem at length, conclude in favor of the incontestable agency of forces and intelligences returning from the farther bank of the great river which it was deemed that none might cross? Must we acknowledge with them that there are cases ever more numerous which make it impossible to hesitate any longer between the telepathic and the spiritualistic theories? I do not think so. I have no prejudices,—what were the use of having any, in these mysteries?—no reluctance to admit the survival and the intervention of the dead; but it is wise and necessary, before leaving the terrestrial plane, to exhaust all the suppositions, all the explanations there to be discovered. We have to make our choice between two manifestations of the unknown, two miracles, if you



prefer, whereof one is situated in the world which we inhabit and the other in a region, which, rightly or wrongly, we believe to be separated from us by nameless spaces which no human being alive or dead has crossed to this day. . . . It is natural, therefore, that we should stay in our own world, as long as it gives us a foothold, as long as we are not pitilessly expelled from it by a series of irresistible and irrefutable facts issuing from the adjoining abyss. . . . The survival of a spirit is no more improbable than the prodigious faculties which we are obliged to attribute to the mediums, if we deny them to the dead; but the existence of the medium, contrary to that of the spirit, is unquestionable; and therefore it is for the spirit, or for those who make use of its name, first to prove that it exists."

Profoundly as he has been impressed by his investigations and significant as he deems them to be as throwing new light on the mysterious possibilities of the inner self, still it is clear, from the above and from other similar statements that might be quoted, that to Maeterlinck all the purported evidence that has been gathered thus far, falls short of furnishing the actual proof for survival after death. He does not close the door against such proof; he admits frankly that it may yet be forthcoming; and it can safely be assumed that Maeterlinck would welcome such convincing proof with joy. But, as yet, for him the evidence for the spiritualistic hypothesis is not so clear as to constitute conclusive proof.

This is by no means to say that Maeterlinck is an unbeliever or even agnostic on the question of survival; quite the opposite is true. He has a very strong, and as we shall see in a moment, a very definite belief in life after death for the individual. But it is for him a *belief* that has not yet been scientifically proved, that may, in fact, be incapable of any such proof,—a belief that seems to him altogether reasonable because it fits in harmoniously with his general view of the uni-

verse, and especially, with what he has discovered of the possibilities of the mysterious "unknown guest" within each being. His belief grows naturally out of his philosophy of life and his conception of the soul, and that it has been profoundly influenced by his studies in the field of psychic phenomena goes without saying. But the thing to be emphasized is, that it is a belief of the intuitive and poetic sense in the man, rather than evidential proof that has convinced his scientific sense. This does not militate against the truth of his belief, however, for there are many other truths than merely scientific truths. That his belief is true for him, we cannot doubt, whether it is for others or not.

In what follows, we desire to paraphrase as clearly as may be done the conclusions to which Maeterlinck has come after his extensive studies and long pondering on the old problem. As he views it, there are five imaginable solutions and no more. (1) The Religious solutions. (2) Total Annihilation. (3) Survival with our consciousness of to-day. (4) Survival without any sort of consciousness. (5) Survival in the Universal Consciousness, or with a consciousness different from that which we possess in this world.

(1) *The Religious Solutions.*

These, oldest of all solutions, are set aside by Maeterlinck, not because they have failed to furnish hope and comfort to multitudes in the past, but because they are no longer satisfying to the modern mind. They "occupy a citadel without doors or windows into which human reason does not penetrate." They affirm, but their affirmations must be accepted on pure faith. If the Christian, for example, seeks a reason for his faith in immortality apart from the creeds, he is reduced to establishing the truth of the scriptures by an argument drawn from the very scriptures in question and — what is more serious — to explain a great and indisputable mys-



tery by a comparatively small mystery that rests only upon the legend which it is his business to prove. In addition, the testimony of the scriptures to immortality is tremendously weakened to-day for the reason that the Christian belief is inseparably bound up with traditional creeds and older views of the scriptures, which are themselves either crumbling or have, for many intelligent persons, practically disappeared in the presence of modern scholarship. Thus the older theological argument fails to satisfy to-day.

(2) *Annihilation.*

To Maeterlinck, total annihilation is impossible. "We are the prisoners of an infinity without outlet, wherein nothing perishes, wherein everything is dispersed but nothing lost. Neither a body nor a thought can drop out of the universe, out of time and space. Not an atom of our flesh, not a quiver of our nerves will go where they will cease to be, for there is no place where anything ceases to be. . . . To be able to do away with a thing, to fling it into nothingness, nothingness would have to exist; and if it exists, under whatever form, it is no longer nothingness. . . . All that dies falls into life; and all that is born is of the same age as that which dies. If death carried us to nothingness, did birth then draw us out of that same nothingness? Why should the second be more impossible than the first? The higher human thought rises and the wider it expands, the less comprehensible do nothingness and death become. In any case, if nothingness were possible, since it could not be anything whatever, it could not be dreadful." If the religious solution no longer satisfies, the theory of total annihilation is, to Maeterlinck, utterly unthinkable.

(3) *Survival with our Consciousness of To-day.*

This is nearly as impossible and incomprehensible as total

annihilation, according to Maeterlinck's view. This is based apparently on his own feelings as to what is most reasonable, and also in part, on the triviality of the communications that purport to come from the dead. As to this last, he asks: "Why do they thus restrict themselves? Why do they jealously hug the narrow strip of territory which memory occupies on the confines of both worlds and from which none but indecisive or questionable evidence can reach us? Are there then no other outlets, no other horizon? Why do they tarry round us, stagnant in their little pasts, when in their freedom from the flesh they ought to be able to wander at ease over the virgin stretches of space and time? Why do they come back with empty hands and empty words? Is that what one finds when one is steeped in infinity? Beyond our last hour is it all bare and shapeless and dim? Of what use is it to die if all life's trivialities continue?"

How much force this argument, drawn from the nature of many of the communications received, may have, is open to question, for there are many other alleged communications which, while not answering all our questions, are nevertheless far from dealing merely in trivialities. With more reason Maeterlinck continues:

"This is certain that when the body disappears all physical sufferings will disappear at the same time. With them will vanish simultaneously all that we call mental or moral sufferings, seeing that all of them, if we examine them well, spring from the ties and habits of our senses. Our spirit feels the reaction of the sufferings of our body or of the bodies that surround it; it cannot suffer in itself or through itself. Slighted affection, shattered love, disappointments, failures, despair, betrayal, personal humiliations, as well as the sorrows and the loss of those whom it loves, acquire their potent sting only by passing through the body which it animates. . . . It is possible that it still grieves over the troubles



of those whom it has left behind on earth. But to its eyes, since it no longer reckons the days, these troubles will seem so brief that it will not grasp their duration; and knowing what they are and whither they will lead, it will not behold their severity. The spirit is insensible to all that is not happiness. It is made only for infinite joy, which is the joy of knowing and understanding. It can grieve only at perceiving its own limits; but to perceive those limits, when there are no more bonds to space and time, is already to transcend them."

Thus, Maeterlinck would argue, that since death means the transcending of the old limits, that which survives death must also transcend the old consciousness that developed under the limitations of the body. It is inconceivable that the consciousness within the physical body, should remain the same unimpaired and limited thing, when that body has been cast aside. The "great experience" of death must involve changes in consciousness in the direction of expansion and enlarged understanding that must, in turn, involve profound significance for the individual.

"Thus," he concludes, "this theory of retaining a full and unimpaired consciousness has very little likelihood and is not greatly to be desired, although with the surrender of the body, the source of all our ills, it seems less to be feared than our actual existence. On the other hand, as soon as we attempt to extend or exalt it, so that it may appear less barbarous or less crude, we are driven back to a theory of a cosmic consciousness, or some sort of modified consciousness." But first let us consider.

#### (4) *Survival without any sort of Consciousness.*

This seems at first sight more probable either than annihilation or survival with a different sort of consciousness. But practically, from the view-point of the good or ill await-

ing us on the other side of the grave, it amounts to the same thing as annihilation. It is undoubtedly the easiest solution. "The body disintegrates and can no longer suffer; the mind, separated from the source of pleasure and pain, is extinguished, scattered and lost in a boundless darkness; and what comes is the great peace so often prayed for, the sleep without measure, without dreams and without awakening."

"But," argues Maeterlinck, "this is only a solution that fosters indolence. If we press those who speak of survival without consciousness, we perceive that they mean only their present consciousness, for man conceives no other; and we have seen that it is almost impossible for that manner of consciousness to persist in infinity." This brings us to the last possible solution, which is evidently Maeterlinck's best thought on the problem, up to date.

#### (5) *Survival with a Modified Consciousness.*

Maeterlinck makes it clear that in the depths of our thought, limited on every side, we shall never be able to form the least idea of an infinite consciousness. And yet it is impossible for us to separate the idea of intelligence from the idea of consciousness. Any intelligence that is not capable of transforming itself into consciousness becomes for us a mysterious phenomenon which we may label with names as meaningless as they are mysterious.

"Now, on this little earth of ours, which is but a dot in space, we see expended in every scale of life, as for instance, in the wonderful combinations and organisms of the insect world, a mass of intelligence so vast that our human intelligence cannot even dream of assessing it. Everything that exists — and man first of all — is incessantly drawing upon that inexhaustible reserve. We are therefore irresistibly driven to ask ourselves if that cosmic intelligence is not the



emanation of an infinite consciousness, or if it must not, sooner or later, elaborate one?"

Survival, absolutely without consciousness, would therefore be possible only if we deny the existence of a cosmic consciousness. When once we admit this consciousness, under whatsoever form, we are bound to share in it, if we survive at all.

"Here begins the open sea. Here begins the splendid adventure, the only one abreast with human curiosity, the only one that soars as high as its highest longing. Let us accustom ourselves to regard death as a form of life which we do not as yet understand; let us learn to look upon it with the same eye that looks upon birth; and soon our mind will be accompanied to the steps of the tomb with the same glad expectation that greets a birth."

"Since we have been able to acquire our present consciousness, why should it be impossible for us to acquire another? For that ego which is so dear to us and which we believe ourselves to possess was not made in a day; it is not at present what it was at birth. Much more chance than purpose has entered into it; and much more alien substance than any inborn substance which it contained. It is but a long series of acquisitions and transformations, of which we do not become aware until the awakening of our memory."

At the very outset, Maeterlinck's view of a modified or progressing consciousness springs from his fundamental conception of the universe and his view of infinity. To him, infinity is not a moveless and immovable thing, from all eternity perfect and at its zenith. He does not believe that at death the illusion of movement and progress which we see from the depths of this life will suddenly fade away. In that case it would be inevitable that at our last breath, we should be absorbed in what, for lack of a better term, we call the cosmic consciousness. He believes rather that death will reveal to

us that the illusion lies not in our senses but in our reason, and that, in a world incontestably alive, despite the eternity preceding our birth, all the experiments have not been made, that is to say, that movement and evolution continue and will never and nowhere stop. Thus he feels obliged to accept the theory of a modified consciousness.

He further tells us, however, that "the theory of a modified consciousness does not necessitate the loss of the tiny consciousness acquired in our body; but it makes it almost negligible, flings, drowns and dissolves it in infinity. . . . If the new environment which we enter on leaving our mother's womb transforms us to such a point that there is, so to speak, no connection between the embryo that we were, and the man that we have become, is it not right to think that the far newer, stranger, wider and richer environment which we enter on quitting life will transform us even more? We can see in what happens to us here a figure of what awaits us elsewhere, and can readily admit that our spiritual being, liberated from its body, if it does not mingle at the first onset with the infinite, will develop itself there gradually, will choose itself a substance, and, no longer trammelled by space and time, will go on forever growing. It is very possible that our loftiest wishes of to-day will become the law of our future development. It is very possible that our best thoughts will welcome us on the farther shore, and that the quality of our intellect will determine that of the infinite which crystallizes around it. . . . Whatever be the force that survives us and presides over our existence in the other world, this existence, to presume the worst, could be no less great, no less happy than that of to-day. It will have no other career than infinity; and infinity is nothing if it be not felicity. In any case, it seems fairly certain that we spend in this world the only narrow, grudging, obscure and sorrowful moments of our destiny."



In another passage, he asks the question: "Will our ego, our soul, our spirit, or whatever we call that which will survive us in order to continue us as we are, will it find again on leaving the body, the innumerable lives which it must have lived since the thousands of years that had no beginning? Will it continue to increase by assimilating all that it meets in infinity during the thousands of years that will have no end? Will it linger for a time around our earth, leading, in regions invisible to our eyes, an even higher and happier existence, as the theosophists and spiritualists contend? Will it move toward other planetary systems, will it emigrate to other worlds, whose existence is not even suspected by our senses? Everything seems permissible in this great dream, save that which might arrest its flight."

And once again: "If we admit that our ego does not remain eternally what it was at the moment of our death, we can no longer imagine that, at a given second, it stops, ceases to expand and rise, attains its perfection and its fullness, to become no more than a sort of motionless wreck suspended in eternity, and a finished thing in the midst of that which will never finish. That would indeed be the only real death. . . . In a word, either we believe that our evolution will one day stop, implying thereby an incomprehensible end and a sort of inconceivable death; or we admit that it has no limit, whereupon, being infinite, it assumes all the properties of infinity, and must needs be lost in infinity and united with it. This, withal, is the latter end of theosophy, and all the religions in which man, in his ultimate happiness, is absorbed by God. And this again is an incomprehensible end, but at least it is life. . . . Behold us then before the mystery of the cosmic consciousness. If this consciousness exist under the form which we have conceived, it is evident that we shall be there and take part in it. If there be a consciousness somewhere, or something that takes the place of conscious-

ness, we shall be in that consciousness or in that thing, because we cannot be elsewhere. And as this consciousness or this thing cannot be unhappy because it is impossible that infinity should exist for its own unhappiness, neither shall we be unhappy when we are in it. Lastly, if the infinity into which we shall be projected have no sort of consciousness, nor anything that stands for it, the reason will be that consciousness or anything that might replace it, is not indispensable to eternal happiness."

Maeterlinck gives us his conclusion to the whole matter in these words: "This I think is about as much as we may be permitted to declare, for the moment, to the spirit anxiously facing the unfathomable spaces, wherein death will shortly hurl it. It can still hope to find there the fulfillment of its dreams; it will perhaps find less to dread than it feared. . . . I have added nothing to what was already known. I have simply tried to separate what may be true from that which is assuredly not true. . . . Many things beyond a doubt, remain to be said. . . . But we need have no hope that any one will utter on this earth the word that shall put an end to our uncertainties. It is very probable, on the contrary, that no one in this world nor in the next, will discover the great secret of the universe. And if we reflect upon this even for a moment, it is most fortunate that it should be so. We have not only to resign ourselves to living in the incomprehensible, but to rejoice that we cannot go out of it. If there were no more insoluble questions nor impenetrable riddles, infinity would not be infinite; and then we should have forever to curse the fate that placed us in a universe proportionate to our intelligence. . . . The Unknown and the unknowable are necessary and will, perhaps, always be necessary to our happiness."

If we have interpreted him correctly, these are the conclusions at which Maurice Maeterlinck arrives, after many



years of study and reflection, of groping and searching for more light. It is evident that they are the views of the poet in whom the intuitive sense is strong and active, rather than of the scientist, controlled alone by the evidence of his senses. His studies in the field of psychic phenomena have not brought to him, as they have to others, the proof that the dead do return. That question for him is still an open question, for which the proof may eventually be forthcoming, or it may not.

What his studies and reflections have brought him, apparently, is the clear conviction — to him based upon incontestable proof — that there is in man a something that survives the body — a soul, a spirit, a self, call it what you will — a something that death does not destroy in the dissolution of the body. He has been profoundly impressed by the mysterious powers and hitherto unguessed possibilities of "the unknown guest," who dwells within each individual. To him it has been proved that this mysterious self can and does function, independently of the senses, while still in the body; and so he finds no difficulty in believing that it will continue to function after it has left the body. It should be clearly noted that the "proof" which Maeterlinck accepts, has to do with the possibility of survival, not with the return of the dead. Psychic Research has convinced him of the first, but has left him still in doubt as to the second.

What does this mean for his general attitude toward both life and death? The old obsession of death as the grim "intruder," which haunted his waking hours and breathes through all of his earlier writings, has vanished. He still confronts the old mystery of human existence, grown even more mysterious with the passing of the years, but it is no longer a mystery surcharged with horror and dread, but one suggesting beneficent change, the larger growth and eternal expansion. In fact the source of the mystery has been trans-

ferred from death to life. Whereas, formerly, death had been the imminent, even threatening power with its fatal influence on life, now he sees that the mystery lies in life itself — the eternal existence — in which death has become the inevitably necessary and inexpressibly desired experience, in the further evolution of the soul-life in man.

In the first act of "The Blue Bird," the fairy Berylune sends Mytyl and Tytyl forth in the search for happiness. Shepherded and protected by Light, they explore the Past and the Future, the Palace of Night, the Kingdoms of the Dead and of the Unborn. At last they find themselves in a grave-yard; and Mytyl grows fearful at her first contact with the great mystery of Death. Yet the grave-yard with its wooden crosses and grass-covered mounds is moonlit and tranquil; and of a sudden, as the revealing diamond is turned in Tytyl's fingers, even the tombstones and "all the grand investiture of death" disappear, to be replaced by luxuriant, swaying clusters of Madonna lilies.

"Where are the dead?" asks Mytyl, in amazement, searching in the grass for traces of even one tombstone.

Her brother also looks, and after a breathless moment,

"There are no dead," is his calm and confident reply.

This line, "There are no dead," in "The Blue Bird," marks the progress of Maeterlinck's thought on the old problem since the days when he wrote "The Intruder." For him it contains the truth, though it is the discovery of the poet in him rather than the scientist. Whether it is the truth for us depends on whether we have approached life from Maeterlinck's view-point.



## CHAPTER III

### WILLIAM JAMES — THE PHILOSOPHER

"Psychic phenomena form indeed a special branch of education, in which experts are only gradually becoming developed. The phenomena are as massive and wide-spread as is anything in Nature, and the study of them is as tedious, repellent and undignified. To reject it for its unromantic character is like rejecting bacteriology because *bacterium termo* lives in putrefaction. Scientific men have long ago ceased to think of the dignity of the materials they work in."— *William James*.

If Maurice Maeterlinck's interpretation of the old problem is essentially that of the poet in whom the scientific spirit is more or less fully developed, the interpretation given us by William James is essentially that of the philosopher, enthusiastically devoted to the experimental method.

The high place held by William James in the field of American scholarship is one of peculiar interest. His unquestioned moral integrity, his genial personality, his original methods as a teacher, his constructive contributions to the progress of thought and, especially, his disinterested and catholic spirit that pervaded all he said and did, have left an indelible impression on his age and endeared him to thousands of thoughtful minds, both in this country and throughout Europe. The students, fortunate enough to have been in his classes, fairly idolized him; while many who have never known him personally owe him a profound debt of gratitude for the light and inspiration received through his writings.

A graduate of the University of Geneva as Doctor of

Medicine, he became, first, Instructor in Physiology in Harvard Medical School, then Professor of Psychology in Harvard College, and later on, was transferred to a Professorship in Philosophy in the same institution, which position he held up to the time of his death, in the summer of 1910. Thus, his entire active life was identified with Harvard University to which his steadily growing fame and widening influence brought great luster.

As a trained doctor of Medicine, as a psychologist whose classic work on the subject, together with numerous other miscellaneous articles, have revolutionized the psychological ideas of the last generation, as an original thinker who is known as one of the foremost exponents in America of the philosophy of pragmatism, and also of the principle of pluralism, possessed of a brain wonderfully organized and well-balanced, with sympathies as broad as life and unswerving in his loyalty to empirical methods, it can readily be seen that William James was peculiarly endowed by nature for the study of any complex problem, and especially qualified for conducting investigations through the torturous labyrinth of psychic phenomena.

In an essay on "Louis Agassiz," he once wrote the following words: "While his scientific ideals were an integral part of his being, something that he never forgot or laid aside . . . he was at the same time so commanding a presence, so curious and inquiring, so responsive and expansive, and so generous and reckless of himself and his own, that every one said immediately, 'Here is no musty *savant*, but a man, a great man, a man on the heroic scale, not to serve whom is avarice and sin.'" These words, written of another, can indeed be taken as giving us an accurate picture of William James himself.

He was the born non-conformist. He cared as little for the orthodoxy of science, as such, as for the orthodoxy of



religion. He was by nature the explorer, the innovator, the experimenter. He loved to walk in the "forbidden territory" of science and of religion, and was apparently uninfluenced by the conventional limitations and social squeamishness of his *confrères*. As he used to say, there was a something in him that was forever impelling him to search for the one "white crow," which alone would be sufficient to disprove the commonly accepted proposition, that "All crows are black." As a matter of fact, there was a peculiar fascination for him in the "unpopular view," that had been outlawed by the conventionally accepted opinions of current science and philosophy. He had a profound sympathy with Shakespeare's famous lines,

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy,"

and he was forever seeking those truths yet undreamed of in modern tendencies of thought.

It was this spirit in James, unquestionably, that awakened in him so deep an interest in the subject of immortality at a time when both science and philosophy were inclined to regard the whole matter as taboo. And, still later, it was the same courageous interest in a field, looked at askance by orthodox scholars, that made him so enthusiastic a member of the American Society for Psychical Research, and that led him at length to become a personal investigator in psychic phenomena.

That James was severely criticized for his work in this field, even by some of his best friends, is well known, and in the opinion of many scholars of the more conservative type, his professional standing suffered considerably; but none of this criticism served to deter him in his investigations. He tells us of once inviting eight of his scientific colleagues to come to his house and sit with a medium for whom the evi-

dence, published in the "Proceedings," was most noteworthy. All but three declined the adventure. He then begged the "Commission," connected with the Chair of a certain learned psychologist in a neighboring university, to examine the same medium. They also asked to be excused from any such entanglement. To his credit, it must be said, that it was during the decidedly "unpopular" stage of psychic inquiry that William James did his fearless work in this field. He tells us that this narrow and intolerant spirit was due to "the temper of our times, a temper which, thanks to Frederick Myers"—and, we may safely add, William James—"will certainly be impossible after this generation."

His wide acquaintance with the work of Janet and Binet in this particular field, and his warm personal friendship with Frederick Myers and Richard Hodgson, secretaries respectively of the English and American Societies for Psychological Research, for whose disinterested skill he had the greatest admiration, as well as his personal investigations carried on with Mrs. Piper and other well-known mediums—all contributed immensely to make effective his natural qualifications for this difficult kind of work.

But before proceeding to consider the results of his studies in the field of psychic phenomena, let us review briefly his original contribution to the problem of immortality, as contained in the Ingersoll Lecture for 1897-1898, delivered at Harvard University under the title, "Human Immortality." In the early part of the lecture he frankly disclaims any special interest in the hereafter, which only gives to what follows an even greater significance. To quote,

"Immortality is one of the great spiritual needs of man. The Churches have constituted themselves the official guardians of the need, with the result that some of them actually pretend to accord or to withhold it from the individual by their conventional sacraments— withhold it at least in the



only shape in which it can be an object of desire. . . . The whole subject of immortal life has its prime roots in personal feeling. I have to confess that my own personal feeling about immortality has never been of the keenest order, and that, among the problems that give my mind solicitude, this one does not take the very foremost place. Yet there are individuals with a real passion for the matter, men and women for whom a life hereafter is a pungent craving, and the thought of it an obsession; and in whom the keenness of interest has bred an insight into the relations of the subject that no one less penetrated with the mystery of it, can attain. Some of these people are known to me. They are not official personages; they do not speak as the scribes, but as having direct authority."

He then proceeds to set forth at length what he calls the "transmission" theory of cerebral action. He reminds us of the great difficulty to the old faith in immortality that is supposed to be raised by modern physiological psychology — a difficulty that relates to the seeming absolute dependence of our spiritual life, as we know it here, upon the brain. How can we believe in life hereafter when Science has once for all attained to proving that our inner life is a function of the so-called "gray matter" of our cerebral convolutions? How can the function possibly persist after its organ has undergone decay?

James affirms that, in this lecture, he wants to be understood as subscribing to the great psycho-physiological formula: *Thought is a function of the brain.* The question then is, does this doctrine logically compel us to disbelieve in immortality? The majority of modern psychologists would doubtless answer "Yes," but James affirms his belief that it has in strict logic no such deterrent power; "that even though our soul's life, as here below it is revealed to us, may be in literal strictness the function of a brain that perishes, yet it

is not at all impossible, but on the contrary quite possible, that the life may still continue when the brain itself is dead."

In explanation of this somewhat paradoxical statement, he points out that the supposed impossibility of its continuance comes from too superficial a view of the admitted fact of functional dependence. The moment we inquire more clearly and ask ourselves how many kinds of functional dependence there may be, we immediately perceive that there is one kind, at least, that does not exclude a life hereafter at all. "The fatal conclusion of the physiologist flows from his assuming off-hand another kind of functional dependence and treating it as the only imaginable kind."

When the ordinary scientist pronounces the phrase: Thought is a function of the brain, he uses the words in the same sense as he would say, "Steam is a function of the tea-kettle," "Light is a function of the electric circuit," or "Power is the function of the moving waterfall." In these latter cases, the several material objects have the function of inwardly creating or engendering their effects, and their function is clearly a productive function. Just so, the psychophysiologist thinks it must be with the brain. Since it creates consciousness in its interior, much as it engenders cholesterin, and creatin and carbonic acid, its relation to the soul's life must also be that of productive function. Then, of course, when the organ perishes, since the production can no longer continue, the soul must likewise die.

But James proceeds to explain that in the world of nature, productive function of this sort is not the only kind of function with which we are familiar. We have there also, releasing or permissive function; and we also find a transmissive function. "The trigger of a cross-bow has a releasing function; it removes the obstacle holding the string and lets the bow fly back to its original shape. So, when the hammer falls upon a detonating compound. In the case



of a colored glass, however, a prism or a refracting lens, we have transmissive function. The energy of light, no matter how produced, is by the glass sifted or limited in color, and by the lens or prism determined to a certain path and shape. Similarly the keys of an organ have only a transmissive function. They open successively the various pipes and let the wind in the air chest escape in various ways. But the air is not engendered in the organ; it is only set free or transmitted through various pipes. . . . My thesis now is this: that when we think of the law, that thought is a function of the brain, we are not required to think of productive function only; we are entitled also to consider permissive or transmissive function. And this, the ordinary psychologist leaves out of account.

“Suppose, for example, that the whole universe of material things should turn out to be a mere surface-veil of phenomena, hiding and keeping back the world of genuine realities — a supposition foreign neither to common sense or to philosophy. Suppose, moreover, that the veil, opaque enough at all times to the full super-solar blaze, could at certain times and places, grow less so, and let certain beams pierce through into this sublunary world. These beams would be so many finite rays, so to speak, of consciousness, and they would vary in quantity and quality as the opacity varied in degree. Only at particular times and places would it seem that as a matter of fact, the veil of nature can grow thin and rupturable enough for such effects to occur. But in those places gleams, however finite and unsatisfying, of the absolute life of the universe, are from time to time vouchsafed. Glows of feeling, glimpses of insight and streams of knowledge and perception float into our finite world.

“Admit now, that our brains are such thin and half-transparent places in the veil, what will happen? Why, as the white radiance comes through, with all sorts of staining

and distortion imprinted on it by the glass, or as the air now comes through my glottis, determined and limited in its force and quality of its vibrations by the peculiarities of those vocal chords which form its gate of egress and shape it into my personal voice, even so, the genuine matter of reality, the life of souls as it is in its fullness, will break through our several brains into this world in all sorts of restricted forms, and with all the imperfections and queer-nesses that characterize our finite individualities here below.

"You see that, on all these suppositions, our soul's life as we here know it, would nonetheless in literal strictness be the function of the brain. The brain would be the independent variable, the mind would vary dependently on it. But such dependence on the brain for this natural life would in no-wise make immortal life impossible." His final conclusion follows:

"In strict logic then, the fangs of cerebralistic materialism are drawn. My words ought consequently already to exert a releasing function on your hopes. You may believe henceforth, whether you care to profit by the permission or not."

James disclaims any knowledge as to how the process of transmission is carried on, but he calls attention to several phases of the theory which seem to him to give it superiority over the more familiar theory. Consciousness in this process does not have to be generated *de novo* in a vast number of places. It exists already, behind the scenes, coeval with the world. This theory also puts itself in touch with the conception of a "threshold," a word which, since Fechner wrote, has played a prominent part in the so-called new psychology. It also helps to explain a whole class of experiences, coming under the head of psychic phenomena, which the production theory does not explain, e. g. religious conversions, answers to prayer, instantaneous healings, premoni-



tions, apparitions at time of death, clairvoyant visions and the whole range of mediumistic phenomena, to say nothing of still more exceptionable and incomprehensible things. James closes his argument by quoting Kant, in support of his theory, where he says: "The death of the body may indeed be the end of the sensational use of our mind, but only the beginning of the intellectual use. This body would thus be, not the cause of our thinking, but merely a condition restrictive thereof, and although essential to our sensuous and animal consciousness, it may be regarded as an impeder of our pure spiritual life." It may be of interest to the reader to note that Mr. F. C. S. Schiller of Oxford, in his well known book, "Riddles of the Sphinx," has defended this transmission theory at some length.

As we trace James's experiences as an investigator in the field of psychic phenomena for more than a quarter of a century, and note carefully all that he has put into his writings on the subject, the impression is gained that he wavers in his judgment as to the real significance of these phenomena, whose genuineness he no more doubts than does Maeterlinck. There are times when he seems clearly convinced that the facts are all to be explained psychically, and then again, he implies, and even says deliberately, that possibly the "spirits" may have something to do with it. This hesitancy to commit himself unequivocally, on the part of a man like James, is most significant. It indicates the disinterested, unprejudiced, sincere and fearless searcher after truth. Nothing more clearly reveals the truly scientific spirit in the study of these phenomena than his many articles, published in the "Proceedings" and elsewhere, during the last twenty years of his life.

In 18— he wrote an essay entitled "Psychic Phenomena," published in his volume, "The Will to Believe and other Essays," in which he reveals not only his interest in the

subject, but states emphatically that, in his judgment, this neglected field of science should be investigated in the simple interests of truth. From this time on he is recognized as one of the best known psychic researchers in this country. Some time later he reports a series of sittings for the "Proceedings" as follows:

"When I first undertook to collate this series of sittings and make the present report, I supposed that my verdict would be determined by pure logic. Certain minute incidents, I thought, ought to make for spirit-return or against it in a crucial way. But watching my mind work as it goes over the data, convinces me that exact logic plays only a preparatory part in shaping our conclusions here; and that the decisive vote, if there be one, has to be cast by what I may call one's general sense of dramatic probability, which sense ebbs and flows from one hypothesis to another — it does so in the present writer at least — in a rather illogical manner. If one sticks to the details one may draw an anti-spiritist conclusion; if one thinks more of what the whole mass may signify, one may well incline to spiritist interpretations." At the end of the above article, he sums up his conclusions as follows:

"I myself feel as if an external will to communicate were probably there, that is, I find myself doubting, in consequence of my whole acquaintance with that sphere of phenomena, that Mrs. Piper's dream-life, even equipped with telepathic powers, accounts for all the results found. But if asked whether the will to communicate be Hodgson's or some mere spirit counterfeit of Hodgson, I remain uncertain and await more facts, facts which may not point clearly to a conclusion for fifty or a hundred years."

In view of the many contradictory statements that have been made publicly since James's death, as to whether he did or did not believe in spirit-return, and as to just what



final conclusions his experiences as a psychic researcher had led him, it is exceedingly fortunate that we have from his pen a clear and explicit statement of his position, which was published in the *American Magazine* for October, 1909. In a more complete and somewhat less popular form, it appeared in the "Proceedings" for the same year. It is now published in his volume, "Memories and Studies," under the title, "Final Impressions of a Psychical Researcher." William James died in August, 1910, so that this, indeed final, statement appeared in print less than a year before his death. That he might have changed his opinions during the intervening months, is of course possible, but if he did so, no authenticated statement of such a change has as yet appeared. So that we seem to be justified in accepting this final public statement as giving us the actual and final conclusions to which his mind had arrived. All who are interested in the position of William James, as he defined it himself, should certainly read this essay, for its frank candor, its clear statement and its fair and impartial spirit.

At the very beginning of the essay he makes the following unequivocal confession: "For twenty-five years I have been in touch with the literature of psychical research, and have had acquaintance with numerous 'researchers.' I have also spent a good many hours (though far fewer than I ought to have spent) in witnessing, or trying to witness, phenomena. Yet I am theoretically no 'further' than I was at the beginning; and I confess that at times I have been tempted to believe that the Creator has eternally intended this department of nature to remain *baffling*, to prompt our curiosities, and hopes and suspicions, all in equal measure, so that, although ghosts and clairvoyances and raps and messages from spirits are always seeming to exist, and can never be fully explained away, they also can never be susceptible of full corroboration.

"The peculiarity of the case is just that there are so many sources of possible deception in most of the observations, that the whole lot of them *may* be worthless, and yet, that in comparatively few cases can aught more fatal than this vague general possibility of error be pleaded against the record. Science meanwhile needs something more than bare possibilities to build upon; so your genuinely scientific inquirer — I don't mean your 'ignoramus' scientist — has to remain unsatisfied. It is hard to believe, however, that the Creator has really put any big array of phenomena into the world merely to defy and mock our scientific tendencies; so my deeper belief is that we psychical researchers have been too precipitate with our hopes, and that we must expect to mark progress not by quarter-centuries, but by half- or whole centuries."

James then proceeds, as he says, "to put my own state of mind upon record publicly," as to the definite conclusions to which his extended investigations have led him.

"I wish to go on record for *the commonness of these phenomena*. I began this article by confessing myself baffled. I *am* baffled as to spirit-return, and as to many other special problems. I am also constantly baffled as to what to think of this or that particular story, for the sources of error in any one observation are seldom fully knowable. But weak sticks make strong faggots, and when the stories fall into consistent sorts that point each in a definite direction, one gets a sense of being in the presence of genuinely natural types of phenomena. As to there being such real natural types of phenomena, ignored by orthodox science, I am not *baffled* at all, for I *am fully convinced of it*.

"One cannot get demonstrable proof here. One has to follow one's personal sense, which of course, is liable to err, of the dramatic probabilities of nature. . . . Our critics here obey their sense of dramatic probability as much as we



do. Take 'raps,' for example, and the whole business of objects moving without contact. 'Nature,' thinks the scientific man, 'is not so unutterably silly. The cabinet, the darkness, the tying, suggested a sort of human rat-hole life exclusively,' and so 'swindling' is for him the dramatically sufficient explanation. It probably is, in an indefinite majority of cases; yet it is to me dramatically improbable that the swindling should not have accreted round some originally genuine nucleus. If we look at human imposture as a historic phenomenon, we find it always imitative. The original swindler in any line imitated some one who was honest. . . . This being the dramatically probable human way, I think differently of the whole type, taken collectively, from the way in which I may think of the single instance. I find myself believing that there is 'something in' these never ending reports of physical phenomena, although I haven't yet the least positive notion of the 'something.' It becomes to my mind simply a very worthy problem for investigation.

"The first automatic writing I ever saw was forty years ago. I unhesitatingly thought of it as deceit, although it contained vague elements of super-normal knowledge. Since then I have come to see in automatic writing one example of a human activity as vast as it is enigmatic. Every sort of person is liable to it, or to something equivalent to it; and whoever encourages it in himself finds himself personating some one else, either signing what he writes by a fictitious name, or spelling out by ouija board or table-tips, messages from the departed. Our sub-conscious region seems, as a rule, to be dominated by a crazy will 'to make believe,' or by some curious external force impelling us to personation. The first difference between the physical researcher and the inexpert person is that the former recognizes the commonness and typicality of the phenomena here, while the latter,

less informed, thinks it so rare as to be unworthy of attention.

"In the second place, I wish to go on record for the presence, in the midst of all the humbug, of *really super-normal knowledge*. By this I mean, knowledge that cannot be traced to the ordinary sources of information — the senses, namely, of the automatist. In really strong mediums this knowledge seems to be abundant, though it is usually spotty, capricious and unconnected. What is one to think of this curious phenomenon in human nature? My own dramatic sense tends instinctively to picture the situation as an interaction between slumbering faculties in the automatist's mind and a cosmic environment of *other consciousness* of some sort, which is able to work upon them. . . . This, I say, is the dramatic view which my mind spontaneously takes, and it has the advantage of falling into line with ancient human traditions.

"The views of others are just as dramatic, for *the phenomenon is actuated by will of some sort anyhow*, and wills give rise to dramas. The spiritist view, as held by Hyslop and Hodgson, sees 'a will to communicate,' struggling through inconceivable layers of obstruction in the conditions. I have heard Hodgson liken the difficulties to those of two persons who on earth should have only dead-drunk servants to use as their messengers. The orthodox scientist, for his part, sees 'a will to deceive,' watching its chance in all of us, and able, possibly, to use 'telepathy in its service.'" Then follows his own general conclusion, which to the writer's best knowledge, is the last authoritative opinion from James on this subject.

"Which kind of will, and how many kinds of will are most inherently probable? Who can say with certainty? The only certainty is that the phenomena are enormously complex, especially if one includes in them such intellectual



flights of mediumship as Swedenborg's, and if one tries in any way to work the physical phenomena in. That is why I, personally, am as yet neither a convinced believer in parasitic demons, nor a spiritist, nor an 'orthodox scientist,' but still remain a psychical researcher, waiting for more facts before concluding.

"Out of my experience one fixed conclusion dogmatically emerges, and that is this, that we with our lives are like islands in the sea, or like trees in the forest. The maple and the pine may whisper to each other with their leaves, and Conanicut and Newport hear each other's fog-horns. But the trees also commingle their roots in the darkness underground, and the islands also hang together through the ocean's bottom. Just so there is a continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds but accidental fences, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother-sea or reservoir. Our 'normal' consciousness is circumscribed for adaptation to our external earthly environment, but the fence is weak in spots, and fitful influences from beyond leak in, showing the otherwise unverifiable common connection. Not only psychic research, but metaphysical philosophy and speculative biology are led in their own ways to look with favor on some such 'panpsychic' view of the universe as this. Assuming this common reservoir of consciousness to exist, this bank upon which we all draw, and in which so many of earth's memories must in some way be stored — or mediums would not get at them as they do — the questions at once arise: What is its own structure? What is its inner topography? What are the conditions of individuation in this mother-sea? Are individual spirits constituted there? How numerous and of how many hierarchic orders may these then be? How permanent? How transient? What, again, are the relations between the cosmic consciousness and matter? Are there

subtler forms of matter which upon occasion may enter into functional connection with the individuations in the psychic sea, and then, and then only, show themselves? — So that our ordinary human experience, on its material as well as on its mental side, would appear to be only an extract from the larger psycho-physical world?

“Vast indeed, and difficult is the inquirer’s prospect here, and the most significant data for his purpose will probably be just these dingy little mediumistic facts which the Huxleyan minds of our time find so unworthy of their attention. But when was not the science of the future stirred to its conquering activities by the little rebellious exceptions to the science of the present? Hardly, as yet, has the surface of the facts called ‘psychic’ begun to be scratched for scientific purposes. It is through following these facts, I am persuaded, that the greatest scientific conquests of the coming generation will be achieved.”

If this last essay on the subject did indeed express James’s final conclusions, before he himself encountered the great mystery of death — and we have no reason to think otherwise — then he too, like Maeterlinck, failed to find the scientific proof of survival after death. At the end, he was still the searcher, not yet the convinced believer. There can be no question, however, but that his studies in this field tremendously influenced his whole attitude toward the problem. From being comparatively uninterested in the subject, as he tells us himself, he became one of the most interested workers in this field of inquiry; he braved criticism and dared the loss of professional standing for the sake of his desire to get at the truth, amid all the humbug. If his earlier hopes were disappointed, it is evident that he firmly believed that eventually it would be possible to arrive at the truth, and that some day the actual proof of immortality might even be forthcoming. In the meantime, in spite of physiological



psychology and philosophical materialism, he maintained with all possible emphasis, that man has a right to believe that death does not end all, without sacrificing his scientific integrity.

It is in his pragmatic view of life that James stresses most clearly man's inalienable right to his belief in immortality, even in the absence of any proof as yet. Among other things, pragmatism means the evolutionary principle applied to knowledge as well as to organisms. Just as the claws of the tiger and the tusks of the elephant were developed to meet the practical needs of these creatures in the struggle for existence, so all of our so-called knowledge has been gradually built up to serve our needs as human beings. This knowledge of which we boast is in no sense final or absolute. It is all relative to human needs, human purposes, human aspirations. All our modern scientific knowledge is only relative, never absolute.

Now, according to this pragmatic view, in all metaphysical questions where we have no positive proof one way or the other, we have the right to believe what we will. Immortality has never yet been disproved by any positive scientific knowledge. Therefore we have the right to believe in the life after death, provided this belief serves our deepest needs as human beings — furnishes courage and strength for life's duties, inspires us to more unselfish service to our fellows here and now, or awakens in us nobler aspirations.

The pragmatism of William James differed from that of Henri Bergson, at least in this respect. Bergson believes that our intellectual knowledge is wrong, while James held that it was right, as far as it went, but that it was inadequate to solve all problems, especially those of man's spiritual nature. And where it failed to find the solution, James contended for the right of faith, of intuition, of belief. It is this pragmatic view of life with its courageous attitude to-

ward the future, its daring to believe, even in the presence of the seemingly insoluble mystery, just because the belief yields the best and the highest to the life of human beings, that has made the writings of William James the source of such rich inspiration to so many men and women.



## CHAPTER IV

### SIR OLIVER LODGE — THE SCIENTIST

"Nor let us imagine that existence hereafter, removed from these atoms of matter which now both confuse and manifest it, will be something so wholly remote and different as to be unimaginable; but let us learn by the testimony of experience — either our own or that of others — that those who have been, still are; that they care for us and help us; that they, too, are progressing and learning and working and hoping; that there are grades of existence, stretching upward and upward through all eternity; and that God Himself, through His agents and messengers, is continually striving and working and planning, so as to bring this creation of His through its preparatory labor and pain, and lead it on to an existence higher and better than anything we have ever known."— *Sir Oliver Lodge*.

SINCE the publication of "Raymond, or Life and Death," in 1916, Sir Oliver Lodge has stood forth as the supreme protagonist of survival after death. The *New York Evening Post* spoke of "Raymond" as "one of the most remarkable books brought forward by the war." It has run through many successive editions, and has probably been as widely read as any one book in this particular field. Sir Oliver Lodge's lecture trip through the leading cities of the United States, the winter of 1919-1920, only served to enhance his steadily growing fame in this country. It is extremely doubtful whether any other living man could have drawn such large and intelligent audiences to listen to the subjects presented. So eminently successful were these lectures, at least as regarded from the view-point of the Lecture Bureau, that it is already announced that Sir Oliver Lodge is to return

next winter for further lectures on the same or similar subjects.

The wide-spread popular interest in these lectures was due, in part, to the subjects considered, but still more to the standing and reputation of the man himself. It is no exaggeration to say that Sir Oliver Lodge is one of the greatest and best known scientists in the world to-day. His work for the past forty years has won for him a place among the foremost mathematicians and physicists in England. For many years he has been the successful President of the College of Birmingham, England, from which position he has but recently retired. Like William James, he has dared to face the intellectual intolerance and social squeamishness of many contemporary scientists in his disinterested search for truth, and there is no question but that he has lost in professional standing, in certain quarters, through his deep interest in psychic phenomena.

If Maeterlinck approaches the subject essentially from the view-point of the poet, and James from that of the philosopher, Lodge's approach is, in general, that of the scientist whose chief interest hitherto has lain in the field of physics. But Lodge is more than the mere conventional scientist; he is also, to a large degree, the philosopher; and this, not in the sense that he is a system-maker, but rather, that in addition to the analytic mind of the scientist, he is possessed also of marked synthetic powers. Having discovered what he deems to be the facts in his special branch of science, he is not content to leave it there but is always seeking to ascertain the bearing of those facts on the sum total of human knowledge. It is the more comprehensive view of the philosopher, not the merely fragmentary view of the scientist, for which he is ever striving.

In what might be called his "Apologia," he reminds us of the limitations of science as such; "Meantime the attitude



of scientific men is perfectly intelligible and not unreasonable, except when they forget their self-imposed limitations and cultivate a baseless negative philosophy. People who study mechanism of course find mechanics, and if the mechanism is physiological, they find physics and chemistry as well; but they are not thereby compelled to deny the existence of everything else. They need not philosophize at all, though they should be able to realize their philosophical position when it is pointed out to them. The business of science is to trace out the mode of action of the laws of physics and chemistry, everywhere and under all circumstances. . . . But scientific workers are sometimes thought to be philosophizing seriously when they should be understood as really only expressing the natural scope of their special subject."

No scientist could be more clearly conscious of the limitations of science as we know it to-day than is Lodge; and therefore, he realizes the inevitable tendency of the scientific specialist to rest content with mere fragmentary conceptions of truth. For this reason he is always pleading the necessity of a philosophy, based on the accepted facts of science, that shall give to man a comprehensive and satisfying view of truth in its totality. He also sees that science, as the body of ascertained knowledge, must be a constantly growing and expanding thing, for the simple reason that all the truth has as yet by no means been ascertained. So, like James, he has felt the strong impulsion, as a scientist, to push out into territories which science has never yet explored, for the sake of discovering the truth now hidden in theory, conjecture, blind belief or even superstition. Thus he could write:

"Some of us, whether wisely or unwisely, now want to enlarge the recognized scope of physical science, so as gradually to take a wider purview and include more of the totality of things. That was what the Society for Psychical Research was established for — to begin extending the range of scien-

tific law and order, by patient exploration in a comparatively new region. The effort has been resented and, at first, ridiculed, only because misunderstood. The effort may be ambitious, but it is perfectly legitimate; and if it fails, it fails."

That his entrance into this field of exploration was bitterly resented by many of his *confrères*, and that he has been, and still is, severely criticized by many scientific scholars is well-known; and yet it is to be remembered that in 1913, his colleagues elected him to the office of President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the foremost scientific organization in the world, thus testifying to the fact that, in the opinion of the members of this distinguished body, his work in the field of psychic research had not altogether destroyed his scientific standing.

It must also be borne in mind that Sir Oliver Lodge, the scientist, is profoundly religious by nature, though he is in no sense the conventional religionist. He sees clearly — no one more so — how much of the older, traditional theology has become obsolete under the influence of modern science, and he realizes how lacking in vitality and sincerity is the professed faith of the churches to-day. No scientist as such has done more than Lodge, through his writings, to rouse the leaders of religion to the imperative necessity of translating their faith into terms of modern life and thought, if organized religion is to remain as a potent influence in society.

In his little book, entitled, "The Substance of Faith," he has given us his religious *credo*, as a modern scientist. While its contents would be far from satisfactory to the conservative theologian, and quite unacceptable if not entirely meaningless to the great mass of conventionally trained Christians, nevertheless it has been a tremendous help to countless men and women, groping for more light in the dark wood of doubt, and it reveals the author as possessed unquestionably of a strong and vital, although unorthodox, religious faith.



To the popular mind generally the impression prevails that Sir Oliver Lodge was led to his belief in survival after death solely through his investigations of psychic phenomena. In a sense this is true — the sense that he found his “proof” of survival in psychic phenomena. But in a deeper sense it is true that he was led to his investigations in this field through his general view of life and the universe to which his earlier studies had led him. For it must be frankly admitted that in his conception of the universe and of life, Sir Oliver Lodge stands squarely opposed to the “orthodox science” of to-day.

It may be doubted whether materialism as a philosophy, at least in its older forms, exists any longer, in the sense of being sustained by serious philosophers; but the fact remains that, under the form of naturalism in philosophy and mechanism in psychology, a practical materialism is dominant to-day in many quarters. In the *Hibbert Journal* for July, 1916, an able writer states thus the main propositions of scientific materialism:

- (1) The Law of Universal Causation.
- (2) The Principle of Mechanism, i. e. the denial of purpose in the universe, and all notions of finalism or teleology.
- (3) The denial that there exists any form of “spiritual” or “mental” entity that cannot be expressed in terms of matter and motion.

Rightly or wrongly — it is not our intention in this connection to pass judgment — Sir Oliver Lodge replies to this statement as follows:

“Proposition (1) is common property; materialistic thought has no sort of exclusive right over it; and to claim propositions (2) and (3) as corollaries from it is farcical. All that need be said about proposition (2) is that a broad denial always needs more knowledge than a specific assertion, and it is astonishing that any sane person can imagine him-

self to know enough about the universe as a whole to be able to complacently deny the existence of any 'purpose' in it. All he can really mean is that scientific explanations must be framed so as to exhibit the immediate means whereby results in nature are accomplished; for whether, or in what sense, they are first, or simultaneously conceived in a mind — as human undertakings are — is a matter beyond our scientific ken. . . . Our experience is that every event has a proximate cause which we can investigate. Of ultimate causes, we as scientific men are ignorant; they belong to a different region of inquiry. If the word 'denial,' therefore, is replaced by the phrase 'exclusion from practical scientific attention,' I for one have no quarrel with clause (2); for it then becomes a mere self-denying ordinance, a convenient limitation of scope. It represents Policy, not Philosophy.

"But attention may be more usefully directed to the extravagantly gratuitous guess involved in proposition (3). Certain phenomena have been reduced to matter and motion — heat, for instance, and sound, the phenomena of gases and liquids, and all the complexities of astronomy. . . . And ever since Newton, it has been the aim of physics to explain everything in its domain in terms of pure dynamics. The attempt has been only partially successful; the Ether is recalcitrant. . . . But I cheerfully admit that in some modified and expanded form, dynamical theory in mathematical physics has proved itself to be supreme.

"But does dominance of that kind give to that splendid science the right to make a gigantic extrapolation and sprawl all over the rest of the universe, throwing out tentacles even into regions which it has definitely abstracted from its attention? There is not a physicist who thinks so. The only people who try to think so are a few enthusiasts of a more speculative habit of thought, who are annoyed with the physicists, from Lord Kelvin down, for not agreeing with



them. And being unable to gather from competent authority any specific instance in which dynamics has explained a single fact in the region of either life or mind or consciousness or emotion or purpose or will — because it is known perfectly well that dynamical jurisdiction does not extend into these regions — these speculators set up as authorities on their own account and, on the strength of their own expectation, propound the broad and sweeping dogma that nothing in the universe exists which is not fully expressible in terms of matter and motion. And then having accustomed themselves to the sound of some such collocation of words, they call upon humanity to shut its eyes to any facts of common experience which render such an assertion ridiculous.”

Regardless of which school of thought may be right, it is clear from the above that Sir Oliver Lodge does not belong to the mechanistic or materialistic schools of modern opinion. He believes in mind as well as in matter. He regards the universe as being essentially spiritual, though manifesting itself through the material; he sees behind the visible, the invisible. He believes that in man there is “something more” than the physical body. He is not afraid to speak of the soul.

In his view, then, life and mind and consciousness do not belong to the material realm; whatever they are in themselves, they are manifestly something quite distinct from matter and energy, and yet they utilize the material and dominate it. “Matter is arranged and moved by means of energy but often at the behest of life and mind. Mind does not itself exert force, nor does it enter into the scheme of physics, and yet it indirectly brings about results that otherwise would not have happened. It definitely causes movements and arrangements, or constructions of a purposed character. A bird grows a feather, and a bird builds a nest; I

doubt if there is less design in the one case than in the other. How life achieves guidance, how even it accomplishes the movements, is a mystery, but that it does accomplish them is a commonplace of observation. From the motion of a finger to the construction of an aëroplane, there is but a succession of steps. From the growth of a weed to the flight of an eagle — from a yeast granule at one end, to the human body at the other — the organizing power of life over matter is conspicuous. Who can doubt the supremacy of the spiritual over the material? It is a fact which, illustrated by trivial instances, may be pressed to the most portentous conclusion."

In his well-known book, "The Ether of Space," Lodge elaborates the thesis from a purely physical point of view, that though intangible and elusive, the Ether is a universal, all-pervading substance, far more substantial indeed than matter, which, according to Lodge, turns out to be a rare and filmy insertion in, or modification of, the Ether of space; and a different set of sense organs might make the Ether eclipse matter, in availability and usefulness. He suggests that there may be etherial bodies, i. e. bodies constructed of the Ether, which of course, would have no chance of appealing to our senses; they would not be apparent to us; they would therefore not be what we ordinarily call bodies; at any rate they would not be material bodies. And yet they might fulfill the real meaning of the term, "body," as a means of manifestation of a mind or life.

"Matter forms an instrument, a means of manifestation, but it need not be the only one possible. We have utilized matter to build up this beautiful bodily mechanism, but when that is done with, *the constructive ability remains*; and it can be expected to exercise its organizing powers in other than a material environment."

It is true that Lodge's theory of the Ether is not accepted by many of the orthodox scientists as being proved, and there



are perhaps very few of them who would follow him in his speculations as to the meaning of the Ether, or who would consent to his hypotheses as to its function in the universe. He himself confesses frankly that it is indeed speculation, but to him it appears to be a reasonable line of speculation and his hypotheses explain for him what is otherwise inexplicable. It is not for us to pass upon the reasonableness either of his hypotheses or his speculations regarding the Ether. What we desire to emphasize is that his "tendency" to a belief in immortality and his later interest in psychic phenomena grow naturally out of his conception of a "spiritual" universe, in which life and mind are distinct entities which cannot be construed in terms of matter and motion.

To sum up his general view: Life must be considered *sui generis*; it is not a form of energy nor can it be expressed in terms of anything else. But although life is not energy, any more than it is matter, yet it directs energy and thereby controls arrangements of matter. Death, on the other hand, is the cessation of that controlling influence over matter and energy, so that thereafter the uncontrolled activities of physical and chemical forces supervene. Death therefore may be called a dissociation, a dissolution, a separation of a controlling entity from a physico-chemical organism. Death is not extinction. Neither the body nor the soul is extinguished or put out of existence. The body weighs just as much as before; the only properties it loses at the moment of death are potential properties. "So also, all that we can assert concerning the vital principle is that it no longer animates that material organism; we cannot safely make further assertion regarding it, or maintain its activity or inactivity without further information."

This is as far as his science and philosophy had led him up to this time. While it is the opposite of materialism and the widely prevalent mechanistic theory, it furnished him no

scientific "proof" whatever of survival after death. But it did make it easy and natural for him to become an active member of the Society for Psychical Research and to carry on personal investigations, with ever increasing interest, in this new field.

In 1913, the year he was elected President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Sir Oliver Lodge took as the subject of his inaugural address, "Continuity." In the course of this address, which was later scattered broadcast throughout the civilized world, he said:

"Science is incompetent to make comprehensive denials about anything. It should not deal in negatives. Denial is no more infallible than assertion. There are cheap and easy kinds of skepticism, just as there are cheap and easy kinds of dogmatism. . . . Consciousness and will are realities of which we are directly aware, just as directly as we are of motion or of force. The plain man does not understand the process of seeing, he does not realize that it is a method of etherial telegraphy; but he sees and hears and touches and wills and thinks and is conscious. This is not an appeal to the mob as against the philosopher; it is an appeal to the experience of untold ages as against the studies of a generation. . . .

"The physical mechanism whereby existence entrenches itself is manifest, or at least has been to a large extent discovered, but it is my duty to remind you and myself, as scientists, that our studies do not exhaust the universe, and that if we dogmatize in a negative direction and say that we can reduce anything to physics and chemistry, we gibbet ourselves as ludicrously narrow pedants, and are falling far short of the richness and fullness of our human birthright. How far preferable is the reverent attitude of the Eastern poet:



“The world with eyes bent upon Thy feet stands in awe with all its silent stars.”

“Either we are immortal beings or we are not. We may not know our destiny but we must have a destiny of some sort. Science may not be able to reveal human destiny, but it certainly should not obscure it. I am one of those who think that the methods of Science are not so limited in their scope as has been thought; that they can be applied much more widely, and that the Psychic region can be studied and brought under law too.”

And then he concludes this memorable address with these significant words: “For myself and my co-workers, I must risk annoying some of you, not only by leaving on record our conviction that occurrences now regarded as occult can be examined and reduced to order by the methods of science, carefully and persistently applied, but by going further and saying with the utmost brevity that already the facts so examined have convinced me that memory and affection are not limited to that association with matter by which alone they can manifest themselves here and now, and that personality persists beyond bodily death. The evidence — nothing new or sensational, but cumulative — to my mind goes to prove that discarnate intelligence, under certain conditions, may interact with us on the material side, and that gradually we may hope to attain some understanding of the nature of a larger existence and of the conditions regulating intercourse across the chasm.”

No words from any scientist could be less evasive or more positive. Spoken by such a man and on such an occasion, it is no wonder that they created a world-wide sensation. To the many already pre-disposed to a belief in immortality, this clear and definite statement from a scientist of such repute, came as the corroboration of all their inmost hopes and desires; to many who had been made agnostic by the

general attitude of modern science, it served to reawaken old hopes that, perhaps after all, death did not end all; while by the orthodox scientist of the materialistic tendency, there was expressed the regret that "another good scientist had gone wrong," and since such did not have the experience with psychic phenomena to enable them to combat Lodge's statements scientifically, they contented themselves by saying that Lodge was a physicist, not a psychologist, and that psychic phenomena was a field that only the trained psychologist was fitted to investigate.

Then came the war and, among millions of others, the death of Sir Oliver Lodge's son, Raymond. The experiences that followed have been so fully recorded by the father in the book entitled "Raymond," and the book itself has been so widely read, it is not necessary in this connection to give more than the final conclusions to which these experiences have brought Sir Oliver Lodge. Here is his general summing up of the case:

"However it may be accomplished, and whatever reception the present-day scientific world may give to the assertion, there are many now who know, by first-hand experience, that communication is possible across the boundary, if there is a boundary, between the world apprehended by our few animal-derived senses and the larger existence concerning which our knowledge is still more limited.

"Communication is not easy, but it occurs; and humanity has reason to be grateful to those few individuals who, finding themselves possessed of the faculty of mediumship, and therefore able to act as intermediaries, allow themselves to be used for this purpose.

"Such means of enlarging our knowledge, and entering into relations with things beyond animal ken, can be abused like any other power; it can be played with by the merely curious, or it can be exploited in a very mundane way in



the hope of warping it into the service of selfish ends, in the same way as old long accessible kinds of knowledge have too often been employed. But it can also be used reverently and seriously, for the very legitimate purpose of comforting the sorrowful, helping the bereaved, and restoring some portion of the broken link between souls united in affection but separated for a time by an apparently impassable barrier. The barrier is turning out to be not hopelessly obdurate after all; intercourse between the two states is not so impossible as has been thought; something can be learned about occurrences from either side; and gradually it is probable that a large amount of consistent and fairly coherent knowledge will be accumulated.

“Meanwhile broken ties of affection have the first claim; and early efforts at communication from the departed are nearly always directed toward assuring survivors of the fact of continued personal existence, to help them to realize that changed surroundings have in no way weakened love or destroyed memory, and urging upon their friends with eager insistence that earthly happiness need not be irretrievably spoiled by bereavement. For purposes of this kind many trivial incidents are recalled, such as are well adapted to convince intimate friends and relatives that one particular intelligence, and no other, must be the source from which the messages ultimately spring, through whatever intermediaries they have to be conveyed. And to the people new to the subject, such messages are often immediately convincing.”

And now for his still more personal convictions: “What then is the conclusion of the whole matter? Or rather, what effect have these investigations had upon my own outlook upon the universe? . . . It must not be supposed that my outlook has changed, appreciably, since the event (Raymond’s death) and the particular experiences just related. My conclusion has been gradually forming itself for years, though

undoubtedly it is based on experiences of the same sort of thing. But this event has *strengthened and liberated my testimony*. It can now be associated with a private experience of my own, instead of with the private experience of others. So long as one was dependent for evidence connected, even indirectly connected, with the bereavements of others, one had to be reticent and cautious and in some cases silent. Only by special permission could any portion of the facts be reproduced; and that permission might, in important cases, be withheld. My own deductions were the same then as they are now, but the facts are now my own.

"I am convinced of continued existence on the other side of death as I am of existence here. It may be said, you cannot be as sure as you are of sensory experience. I say I can. A physicist is never limited to direct sensory impressions; he has to deal with a multitude of conceptions and things, for which he has no physical organ; the dynamical theory of heat, for instance, and of gases, the theories of electricity, of magnetism, of chemical affinity, of cohesion, aye, and his apprehension of the Ether itself, lead him into regions where sight and hearing and touch are impotent as direct witnesses, where they are no longer efficient guides. In such regions everything has to be interpreted in terms of the insensible, the apparently unsubstantial, and in a definite sense, the imaginary. Yet these regions of knowledge are as clear and vivid to him as are any of those encountered in everyday occupations; indeed most commonplace phenomena themselves require interpretation in terms of ideas more subtle — the apparent solidity of matter itself demands explanation — and the underlying non-material entities of a physicist's conception become gradually as real and substantial as anything he knows. As Lord Kelvin used to say, when in a paradoxical mood, 'we really know more about electricity than we do about matter.'



"That being so, I shall go further and say that I am reasonably convinced of the existence of grades of being, not only lower in the scale than man but higher also, grades of every order of magnitude from zero to infinity. And I know by experience that among these beings are some who care for and help and guide humanity, not disdaining to enter even into what must seem petty details, if by so doing they can assist souls striving on their upward course. . . . And further it is my faith — however humbly it may be held — that among these lofty beings, highest of those who concern themselves directly with the earth, of all the myriad of worlds in infinite space, is One on whom the right instinct of Christianity has always lavished heartfelt reverence and devotion.

"My own time down here is getting short; it matters little; but I dare not go till I have borne this testimony to the grace and truth which emanate from that divine Being, the realization of whose tender-hearted simplicity and love for man may have been overlaid at times and almost lost amid well-intentioned but inappropriate dogma, but who is accessible as always to the humble and the meek."

Such, in brief, is the truly remarkable testimony of Sir Oliver Lodge as to the results of his studies of forty years in the field of physics and mathematics, supplemented by at least twenty years of patient investigations in the field of psychic phenomena. Clearly, frankly, unequivocally, he accepts the spiritistic hypothesis as finally proved, at least for him. Unlike Maeterlinck and James, who confess themselves to being still psychic researchers, Lodge is sure that he has discovered the positive proof of human survival. With him the evidence for a spiritual universe and the continuity of life has been cumulative, reaching its climax undoubtedly in the recent experiences with Raymond's "spirit." From being an earnest inquirer, he moved on to the position of the believer, and at last, he is convinced, and on "scientific evidence," of

the truth of what he has formerly believed, so that he can honestly say, "I am as convinced of continued existence on the other side of death as I am of existence here."

Such statements as we have quoted, if made by a spiritualist of a generation ago, would have only excited ridicule or even contempt, outside of an exceedingly restricted circle. But coming from Sir Oliver Lodge to-day, they have certainly aroused wide-spread, and for the most part, respectful interest, even though they have in no sense compelled general acceptance of his position. To those who have read his books — not simply, "Raymond" — and to those who have listened to his lectures on the subject, there can be no doubt as to his transparent sincerity, and no question but that for him the truth has been found at last. For him, faith has indeed become knowledge. He makes one feel that he *knows*, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he is actually in communication with a real and living Raymond to-day.

And yet the question — "the eternal doubt" — will still intrude: Has he, great scientist though he be, unconsciously deceived himself? May he not have accepted as "scientific evidence" that which coincides with his own hopes, his desires, his love, more than it conforms to scientific tests? He thinks not; and no one doubts his veracity, however inclined some may be to question his judgment. Who can say, as yet? Whether Sir Oliver Lodge is right or mistaken, in the conclusions he has reached, cannot be answered positively to-day; the final verdict must await the further disclosures of the investigations in the field of psychic phenomena.

It is quite evident that the impression made upon those who heard his lectures depended upon the previous bias of the individual toward the subject. Those who already believed, naturally went away confirmed in their belief. The scientifically inclined — of the orthodox type — were very sure that he had interpreted facts by the spiritistic hypothesis that



were perfectly capable of psychic interpretation, and that he had drawn false conclusions from his premises. The honest "doubters" who were looking for "more light" were doubtless impressed, but, for the most part, remained unconvinced. And there were some who were heard to say that he impressed them as a simple-minded, honest old man, so obsessed with the idea of survival after death, that he had lost all perspective and could see nothing else.

The question naturally arises: Why, if Sir Oliver Lodge has indeed found the "scientific proof," is he not more successful in carrying conviction to other minds both through his books and his lectures, especially since there are so many to-day who profess to be honestly looking for more light on the old problem? Is his logic at fault? Can his alleged facts indeed be explained upon some other than the spiritistic hypothesis? Are his conclusions based upon mere assumptions? Is the trouble due to the difficulty of making the significance of psychic phenomena clear to minds untrained in such investigations?

Or, is it because the spirit of the age is so sunk in materialism that it is well-nigh impossible to conceive of any but a material existence, and even the best men and women remain incredulous in the presence of spiritual truth? Or, finally, is it because for forty years, Sir Oliver Lodge has been discovering meanings in his studies of nature and its forces, and encountering experiences, personal, intimate and vital, in his investigations of psychic phenomena, such as have never come to the rank and file of men and women, and whose evidential value, in the nature of things, can never be imparted to others through mere words?

At any rate, Sir Oliver Lodge has honestly sought to base his conclusions upon experience, and without some similar experience, his words must naturally seem quite meaningless, or else they must be accepted on faith.

sailed by those more serious. His response was always prompt and vigorous, but he always kept his temper and courtesy. He was never intolerant nor fanatical, and, unlike so many other "spiritualists," he did not resent the expression of opinions contrary to his own, nor did he ever claim for his views any special tenderness of treatment in controversy. He welcomed controversy as a means of eliciting the truth, and while himself at last convinced that the dead are alive and can communicate with the living, he did not insist nor expect that others should follow him, until they had become likewise convinced.

Unlike many outspoken "spiritualists," Hyslop knew as well as any one the other explanations that might be given for psychic phenomena besides the spiritistic one; and he had more than ordinary skill in demonstration that they, too, made demands on faith, and even on credulity, as the condition of their acceptance. His broad general culture has also enabled him to point out the bearings of the notion of survival on the life of man here and now — on politics, society and religion; and thus he has indicated the social, moral and religious implications of the belief in immortality, perhaps, more clearly and forcefully than any other writer.

It is fortunate indeed that Hyslop has left behind him some dozen or more books, in which he has carefully and most exhaustively compiled the results of his long investigations, stating clearly and frankly the evidence which has led him to his final conclusions, and also writing most illuminatingly and suggestively on the larger implications of the subject. These books will continue to hold their richly deserved and prominent place in the literature of psychic phenomena.

The spirit in which the prosecution of his investigations has been carried on from beginning to end, finds clear expression in the preface to his last book, entitled, "Contact with the Other World." "The present volume endeavors to treat



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## CHAPTER V

### JAMES HERVEY HYSLOP — THE PSYCHOLOGIST

“‘Science,’ says Lord Morley, who was saturated with the philosophy of the Encyclopedists, ‘when she has accomplished all her triumphs in her own order, will still have to go back, when the time comes, to assist in building up a new creed by which man may live.’ That time has come, and recreant or cowardly is the man who does not seize the opportunity to shield the ideals that may bring a ‘little sheen of inspiration out of the surrounding eternity to color with its own hues man’s little islet of time.’ All action has its fruition in the future and we must see the prospect before we can act rationally. Only he who has hope can be moved to any ventures that have idealism for their motive, or progress for their rational end.”—*James Hervey Hyslop*.

THE death of James Hervey Hyslop, after a lingering illness, in the early summer of 1920, removed from the field of psychic investigation its foremost leader in America to-day, and one of the most able and devoted workers that the “new science” has thus far produced. His services to the cause in this country have been of greater value than those of any other single individual, since the death of Richard Hodgson.

After occupying the Chair of Logic and Ethics in Columbia University for a number of years, Hyslop resigned his professorship on account of a physical break-down, in 1904. The year following, Richard Hodgson, Secretary of the American Branch of the Society for Psychical Research, died; and in May, 1906, the new American Society was organized with Doctor Hyslop as its Secretary. This official position he occupied until the time of his death.



As a former teacher of ethics, a skilled logician, possessed of a very considerable amount of scientific knowledge and thoroughly imbued with the scientific spirit, with a strong bent toward psychological studies, Hyslop brought to his investigations rare and unusual qualities of fitness for this most difficult work. While not a specialist in the field of psychology, nevertheless his approach to the subject was essentially that of the logician and the psychologist.

It was long ago, probably even before he came to devote himself entirely to investigation in the psychical domain, that his writings revealed plainly enough, and not involuntarily, how strong was his own inclination to believe, not only that the dead are somewhere alive, but that they can and do send messages in various forms to the living. It was this predisposition to believe that doubtless led him eventually to devote his talents exclusively to these subjects.

However, it was not until late in his life that he came out frankly and publicly on the side of the spiritistic hypothesis. Before that, he carefully, and somewhat laboriously, maintained the attitude of the disinterested seeker after truth, of the possessor of the open mind, ready to follow wherever the facts might lead him. It is quite evident that he was fighting against his own natural desire to believe, in the desire to base his final conclusions on what he deemed to be purely scientific evidence.

While a number of men of higher scientific attainments and of greater repute have come in their old age to agree with his conclusions, it is doubtful whether any one of them has remained so much the scientist to the end, or employed so consistently both the language and the methods of science, as has Hyslop.

In the course of his long career in psychical research, Hyslop has been the object of many attacks. He has been ridiculed by thoughtless critics and, occasionally, bitterly as-

sailed by those more serious. His response was always prompt and vigorous, but he always kept his temper and courtesy. He was never intolerant nor fanatical, and, unlike so many other "spiritualists," he did not resent the expression of opinions contrary to his own, nor did he ever claim for his views any special tenderness of treatment in controversy. He welcomed controversy as a means of eliciting the truth, and while himself at last convinced that the dead are alive and can communicate with the living, he did not insist nor expect that others should follow him, until they had become likewise convinced.

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The spirit in which the prosecution of his investigations has been carried on from beginning to end, finds clear expression in the preface to his last book, entitled, "Contact with the Other World." "The present volume endeavors to treat



every aspect of the problem regarding a future life and especially emphasizes a large mass of facts that ought to have cumulative weight in deciding the issue. . . . The work as a whole makes an effort to help readers who want a scientific view of the subject, into a critical way of dealing with problems which are far larger than the case of mere survival. The attitude is more conservative than many of the books that have a popular hearing. This is rendered necessary by the exceedingly complex nature of the problems before psychic research. If I succeed in leading intelligent people to take scientific interest in the phenomena while they preserve proper cautions in accepting conclusions, I shall have accomplished all that can be expected in a work of this kind, and though I regard the evidence of survival after death conclusive for most people who have taken the pains to examine the evidence critically, I have endeavored in this work to canvass the subject as though it had still to be proved."

He further defines the aims and the limits of psychic research, as he conceives them, in the following words: "It is easy to understand the accusation that psychic research is connected with fetishism, for its fundamental interest is in a doctrine that had its origin in what is known as animism. But the attempt to throttle investigation by invoking the contempt heaped on primitive minds was hasty and ill-advised. Those who think it dignified to study folk-lore certainly cannot consider it undignified to pursue inquiries into the real causes of animism. . . . Primitive minds may have been wrong in their theories, but they seem to have had facts which require consideration, even though we go no further than fraud or hysteria to account for them; and to find these facts is to discover their kinship with those of modern times."

"But true psychic research took its origin not from any sympathy with the ideas of savages nor from any consciousness that the two stages of culture are connected. It was a

very concrete set of incidents that exacted of fair-minded men, the examination of the facts. Even the types of phenomena did not present themselves clearly at the outset. The most prominent were those claiming to embody some form of communication with the dead; but types of unusual phenomena were soon found that could lay no claim to this character, and they seemed to offer a ground of compromise between orthodox science and the claims of the supernatural. Among such phenomena were telepathy or mind reading, dousing, hypnosis, suggestion, muscle reading and perhaps a few others."

This set of phenomena, at least, superficially appeared to be inexplicable by the ordinary theories of science. They were taboo to normal psychology, for no scientific man was prepared to reinstate the traditional idea of the supernatural. Hence the terms "psychic research" and "psychic phenomena" were chosen to denominate a border-land set of phenomena that might possibly be resolved into recognized types of events which, though unusual, would not necessitate the revision of orthodox beliefs. Psychic Research thus became a compromise offered by one school of recognized scientists to another, in the hope that some means might be found to extend tolerance to certain persistent facts that would not disappear at the command of conjurer or skeptic."

"The three types of phenomena which gave most offense were telepathy, apparitions and mediumship. Hypnotism had won recognition, though only after meeting opposition hardly less bitter than that which these more inexplicable facts encountered. Muscle reading and phenomena due to hyperaesthesia, or acute sensibility, lay on the border-land, and offered to the conservative mind a natural explanation of the facts to which they were relevant. Fraud, coincidence and suggestion were explanations which further limited or refuted the claims of the supernormal or the supernatural.



“Not all the phenomena appropriated by Psychic Research are of equal value in the study of the problem which came easily to the front; namely, the problem of the existence of discarnate spirits. The theory of spirit-agency had been advanced from time immemorial, to cover the whole field; but it was the first task of investigators to discriminate among the phenomena and to determine their evidential values. For instance, neither telepathic coincidences nor the movement of objects without physical contact is, in itself, evidence of spiritual agencies. . . . The field had to be mapped out on the basis that many people were not discriminating in the explanation of the facts. . . . Only apparitions and mediumistic phenomena presented any immediately apparent evidence for discarnate spirits.

“Any new fact always alters the perspective of previous knowledge, even when it does not revolutionize it. Psychic Research was well adapted to rouse curiosity on the subject of the supersensible. Even telepathy so threatened the stability of materialism that skepticism was irreconcilably opposed to it, though telepathy did not involve spirit agencies. But phenomena that even looked like evidence in favor of ‘spirits,’ excited the most rabid skepticism, because they seemed to threaten all the previous conquests of physical science over the supernatural.

“It was impossible to evade the discussion of the doctrine of spiritualism in the face of its claims. No matter what our decision about telepathy, dousing, telekinesis and hypnotism, the apparent meaning of apparitions and mediumistic phenomena required further consideration; and whether we believed or disbelieved in the spiritistic interpretation, we had to face the issue. The practical and ethical interests of man concentrated attention on this one question and subordinated all others. Spiritualism therefore gained prominence and, in the course of time, challenged any defender of materialis-

tic science to meet it in the arena. Skepticism was handicapped in such a debate. It might insist on natural laws, but it was always menaced by the prospect of contending with human needs, which have as much influence in determining many beliefs as any of the rigid standards of evidence that will have nothing to do with the ethical ideals of man."

We have quoted these particular passages, not only as revealing the spirit and the attitude that pervades all Hyslop's work in this field, but also, as clearly pointing out why it was that psychic research has increasingly and inevitably come to be more and more engrossed in the supreme question of human survival. At bottom, this is the primary and fundamental problem that must be solved before any full or final explanation of this class of phenomena can be found.

Hyslop makes it very clear, in all that he has written on the subject, that the term, "spirit," means nothing more than *the stream of consciousness or personality* with which we are familiar in every human being. Whether it is accompanied by what is called "the spiritual body" of Saint Paul, "the astral body" of the theosophists, or the "etherial organism" of the Greek materialists and many scientific spiritualists of to-day, he regards as wholly irrelevant to the main question. He neither upholds nor denies that we have "spiritual bodies" not perceptible to sense. Even if one assumes this spiritual body, one need not necessarily accept the spiritistic theory of the mind.

"What we want to know is whether that spiritual body is conscious or not, and conscious with the same memory that the person had when living his earthly life. If the spiritual body has no memory of the past, if the stream of consciousness or personality does not survive with it, there is little interest in the fact of survival either as a spiritual body or in the form of reincarnation. The interesting and important thing is *the survival of personal identity*, which consists wholly in the



stream of consciousness with its memory of the past, and not in any spiritual body, no matter how necessary this latter may be to the survival of the mental stream itself."

Hyslop, it is evident, uses the term "personality" purely in the technical or philosophic sense. This conception of personality is concerned only with mental characteristics; it makes no distinction between common and specific marks. In fact, it connotes mental processes rather than fixed qualities. The capacity for having mental states, or the fact of having them, constitutes personality for the psychologist. Personality is thus the stream of consciousness, regardless of the question whether any special state is constant or casual, essential or unessential.

It is this conception of personality that gives rise to perpetual misunderstandings between the psychologist and the public. The layman with his popular conception of personality looks for physical phenomena of some kind to prove survival. Consequently he prefers materialization, which best satisfies his conception of personality. He demands sensory characteristics, while the psychologist fixes his attention on mental states as the proper conception of personality that may survive. All forms of materialization, and in fact all forms of physical phenomena, taken by themselves, do not furnish the evidence for survival. It is precisely because mental states are not presented to sense, that the psychologist is able to conceive the possibility of immortality.

"We have to determine the survival of personality in the same way that we determine whether another person in the body is conscious. We are so accustomed to think that we have direct knowledge of other personalities, that we forget the exceedingly complicated process of ascertaining whether other people are conscious. That this process is the same as that of ascertaining the existence of discarnate spirits will be apparent from the following considerations;

(1) We know personality or consciousness *directly*, or introspectively, only in ourselves.

(2) We know the existence of personality or consciousness in others, only *indirectly*, or by inference from behavior manifested in some form of action.

(3) Catalepsy and paralysis, in some cases, involve a disappearance of personality similar to that of death, but its reappearance shows that it was still present when it was supposed to be non-existent.

(4) Death offers a situation only slightly different from that of catalepsy and paralysis. Consciousness ceases to function, and we should remain in total ignorance of its continued existence, unless we ascertain facts which necessitate the inference of its persistence.

It is thus the stream of consciousness that is for Hyslop the thing of prime importance in the question of survival. There might be "spiritual" bodies without personality; it only defers the real problem to assume or prove their existence. Ultimately, we are driven to the discovery of facts which will prove the continuance of personality as a stream of consciousness by the method here used — namely, the isolation of consciousness from the body, or the production of facts from which an inference can be drawn that this personality has persisted beyond death and is not a function of the physical body.

It is from these general premises and in this spirit that Hyslop has carried on his investigations for a score or more years. He summarizes his results from this work in the following personal conclusions:

"Whatever skepticism prevails regarding these facts of psychic research is due to various influences. Sometimes it is mere prejudice; sometimes it is ignorance both of the problem and of the facts; and there is much opposition that is based on neither prejudice nor ignorance, but on mere intellectual obstinacy and pride. It is easy to oppose any belief



if you are so disposed. The will to disbelieve is quite as prevalent as 'the will to believe,' and is no more creditable. Much prejudice and ignorance are excusable, when we consider how powerfully environment acts upon our beliefs. The line of least resistance is to follow the ideas of the community in which we have been brought up. Prejudice is, therefore, more or less unavoidable, at least on matters about which we have little or no opportunity to work out systematic beliefs. Ignorance is but an accompaniment of these same influences and is more excusable than prejudice.

"Hostility, however, based upon intellectual pride and obstinacy, has no such excuse. It is irrefutable except by ridicule and the resistance of public opinion. It infects all minds sophisticated by knowledge and tending to defend pre-existing ideas. . . . Nevertheless, all intelligent people are called upon to keep preconceptions in abeyance in the presence of new facts. Truth is always dependent upon facts enough to make it clear that it represents some sort of law in the world. Even if facts are exceptional they must be compatible with the law of unity in nature. Frequency of occurrence is the evidence of law and of articulation with the cosmic order. This fact explains and, at least, half justifies the cautiousness of the average man in weighing every claim that comes along for the supernatural. But history has shown us that caution has its limits. Such an influence might be invoked, as it was by the Church, against any change of our ideas whatever. But no such habit should characterize the scientific mind. The very essence of science is the understanding of change as well as the constancies of nature.

"The course suggested, however, has not often been taken. From no one has psychic research met more opposition than from the scientific man. His attitude is explicable but not always excusable. The conquests of physical science are supposed to have eliminated the 'supernatural' from human

belief, and most scientific men still think that psychic research threatens to restore that 'beast' to power. But there is no danger that past conceptions of the supernatural will again find currency, and no serious consequences can happen from giving the term 'supernatural' as clear a meaning as that of 'nature.'

"The emphasis, however, upon regularity is important. The systematic and rational behavior of life depends upon the constancies of the cosmos. If it were as changeable as the supernaturalist assumes it to be, there would be little opportunity for any ethical development, and perhaps none for the slow evolution of human life and its functions. The scientific skeptic of the 'supernatural' has in his hands the answer to the question *cui bono*, if only he will use it instead of making the concept of nature serve as the basis of a new dogmatism and a new intolerance. But in order to defend regularity, he sacrifices all the benefits that come from a spiritual conception of the world's order. His opponent insists as strenuously on a conception that invokes caprice against law. Why are not both law and caprice as reconcilable with nature as with the supernatural? It is certain that both exist, whatever view we take either of nature or the supernatural.

"It is wearisome to insist on the meaning of such facts as I have cited in this volume" ("Contact with the Other World"). "Their import is clear. They certainly make a spiritistic hypothesis acceptable. The illustrations quoted may not suffice to demonstrate the existence of a future life, if taken alone or regarded as the total evidence of such a theory, and I do not quote them with the expectation that they alone will settle the issue. They are but examples of phenomena as old as history, and as extensive and constant as any other phenomena of nature.



"The only difficulty the spiritistic hypothesis faces is the ignorance and prejudice of the public. That ignorance and prejudice may be excusable; but they are obstacles, and the only obstacles to the belief in immortality. The objections based upon the triviality of the facts, the fragmentary and confused nature of the communications and the absurdity of the revelations, are beside the mark. They betray total ignorance of the problem and of the process involved in getting the data. The problem of the proof of personal identity is crucial, and nothing but trivial facts will satisfy the conditions of such proof. The fragmentary nature of the messages and the apparent absurdities of the revelations about the other world are caused by the process of communicating and by the difficulties of representing a different world in terms of our own. Untrained readers assume too readily that the conditions of intercourse between the two worlds are either like our own, or so nearly like them as not to effect the contents of the messages.

"The spiritistic hypothesis is not a revelation but an explanation. Its development and ramifications await future work. At present it is necessary as a means of making the main facts intelligible. It maintains only that there is scientific evidence of the survival of personal consciousness, and not that we know all about the nature and conditions of a transcendental world. It establishes the main point and leaves the accessories of the hypothesis to be determined.

"Personally I regard the fact of survival after death as scientifically proved. I agree that this opinion is not upheld in scientific quarters. But this is neither our fault nor the fault of the facts. Evolution was not believed until long after it was proved. The fault lay with those who were too ignorant or too stubborn to accept the facts. History shows that every intelligent man who has gone into this investigation, if he

gave it adequate examination at all, has come out believing in spirits; this circumstance places the burden of proof on the shoulders of the skeptic.

"The present war and the manner in which it is making multitudes think of the meaning of life and death will do more than a hundred years of academic talk to awaken interest in the problem. The person suffering the pangs of grief or asking for the solution of the enigma of existence, and not afraid of his neighbor, will think for himself. Those who have to face the realities, both economical and moral, will not trust their salvation to sophists or to men who do not enter into the real problems of the world. They will go straight to the solution that fits the facts, and as usual, the academic sophist will lose his hold on the forces of civilization.

"Insight has more to do with the problem than much learning. The public will go straight to the heart of the matter, and those who assume academic authority without scientific knowledge will find themselves shorn of power. Those who should have led will have to follow. If they do not see their opportunity, we can only repeat the warning of the prophet: 'Israel is joined to his idols, let him alone.'

"But whatever we believe about immortality to-day, we cannot question the causal influence of consciousness on the stream of physical phenomena. If we once grant the existence of spirit, incarnate or discarnate, we must admit it to a place among the causes in nature; indeed we shall hardly discover its existence save through its effects.

"I do not forget that the belief in immortality may be abused. It is as easy to be too 'other-worldly' as to be too worldly. The truth is beneficial or harmful according to the character of the man who accepts it. Guns and gunpowder are exceedingly useful in the hands of the right man but a dangerous evil in the wrong hands. We prize liberty but there is no conception which cannot be abused more than this.



There is probably not a single truth which human nature cannot pervert. A belief in a future life is no exception. But the fact that it was abused in the Middle Ages, or that it may be too much stressed by some minds, is no reason for ignoring the doctrine. Some tell us that Nature or Providence does not intend us to know about a future life, but the same type of mind told us that we should not inquire into the process of nature.

“ There is no truth that can be made more helpful to man than a belief in survival. It will all depend on the balance of his mind. Disregarding it, leads to the materialism that has nearly wrecked civilization in the greatest war of history. We do not want the belief established in order to concentrate attention again on the hereafter, but to fix a balance in human endeavor. If Nature values the inner life, what man has called the ‘ spiritual life ’— the virtues of reflection, gentility, unselfishness and all the attitudes of mind and will that take him away from an exclusively sensuous life, it is time that we have a philosophy and outlook that helps to sustain the higher ideals of consciousness. It is for its reflex influence on the ethics of the present life that it is important, not for its power to make us ignore the imperative duties of the present.

“ The neglect or hostility which the subject receives is one of the curious problems of psychology. If a new engine for an *aéroplane* is announced, the inventor is acclaimed a benefactor of the world. If some new substance to take the place of gasoline is discovered, all the capitalists in the country tumble over themselves to get control of it. A new element in chemistry is announced with all the fervor of a miracle. Anything that will fill the human belly with the husks that the swine do eat, is considered the greatest thing in the world. But if a man offers evidence that he has a soul and that he may expect to live after death, he is called insane, though he

may prove the prolongation of consciousness which is the one aspiration of every effort a man makes in life. No better indication of the utter materialism of the age could be adduced.

"The belief in immortality is the keystone to the arch of history, or the pivotal point about which moves the intellectual, the ethical and the political forces of all time. If science cannot protect our ethical ideals, it will have to succumb to the same corrosion that has worn away the Church. Something must put an end to doubt. There are many situations in life that call for heroic measures, and skepticism on the outcome of life offers no inducement to the heroic virtues.

"Poetry has probably done more than philosophy to redeem the human race. It sees more than naked facts. These last we must see and respect, with all the clearness that will prevent their discoloration from interest and emotion. But if we suppose that knowledge achieves its ends without feeling, we shall miss the main opportunities of life. Neither one nor the other is the whole object of existence. They supplement each other.

"The Stoic on the one hand and the Epicurean on the other, equally miss the meaning of life. The *via media* has always been the path of sanity and commonsense, and neither knowledge nor emotion alone will give intellectual or moral health. Their functions must be adjusted to each other; only on that condition will a man be saved the ravages of skepticism and the consequences of libertinism.

"The age is in the throes of a search for certitude, and it is not limited, in that search, to the problem of immortality. The belief in immortality, which had been made important for many centuries, was doomed to decay unless assurance could be given the human mind regarding it. It had been so closely related to Ethics that its decay threatened the destruction of all ethical and spiritual endeavor. We take what is certain, if it is only the sensuous life, but if we find that



Nature assigns this a secondary place and means to preserve the inner spiritual life for further cultivation, the sacrifice of the physical and sensuous is rendered more easy, and even when it has a place in our spiritual development, it will not have the intensity of interest that it possesses when we have the prospect of nothing else.

"Were we mere animals, without ideals or hopes, we might be indifferent to the course of Nature. We might live in the present moment without doing any violence to the moral laws. But if ideals encourage in us a life above the sensual, we need assurance that Nature will compensate us for the present loss; and if we find that survival is part of her scheme, the bitterness that would haunt us if we were without hope will be less poignant. . . . We need an interpretation of the world which will do something to mitigate suffering, if we cannot escape it, or to excuse it, if we find it a means to an end. The sadness of sunset is only sublime pathos when we are assured of another dawn."

Thus we see that Hyslop, like Sir Oliver Lodge, has found through his investigations of psychic phenomena what is to him the clear proof, based on "scientific evidence," of survival after death. He writes even more dogmatically than do the others we have considered of his conclusions, which he professes to have reached as a trained logician, employing only the scientific method in his study of the facts. It is to be noted, however, that he confines himself exclusively to the main question of the survival of personal consciousness. Of the nature and conditions of the life hereafter he has nothing to say, and he refrains from all speculations on the future in which Sir Oliver Lodge is inclined to indulge. He understands his age in its moral and spiritual weaknesses, and it is the ethical implications of survival that make the strongest appeal to him. For him, the problem is vastly more than one of merely curious human interest as to the future, or of find-

ing some real and positive assurance that may bring comfort and confidence to the sorrowing. It is a life and death matter, in more senses than one. The higher moral and spiritual life of men and women depend on the discovery and the acceptance of this truth. He writes with all the fervor of a prophet of old, as he seeks to make it clear that unless humanity can regain its vital faith in immortality, civilization, in all that makes it worth while, is doomed.

There can be no question, as one reads his books carefully, but that survival after death is the "proved truth" to Hyslop; he fairly glories in his "knowledge," and yet, to how many who read, have his books been able to impart the same clear conviction of truth? Does the difficulty lie in his interpretation of the facts, however honest; is his logic at fault, or as he claims, is the ignorance, the prejudice, the intellectual pride and obstinacy of the many who still doubt, the real cause of their unbelief?



## CHAPTER VI

### THE PRESENT STATUS OF PSYCHIC RESEARCH

"No sane man has ever pretended, since science became a definite body of doctrine, that we know or ever can hope to know or conceive the possibility of knowing whence the mechanism has come, why it is there, whither it is going, or what may be beyond or beside it which our senses are incapable of appreciating. These things are not 'explained' by science and never can be."—*Sir E. Ray Lankester*.

THE four outstanding investigators in the field of psychic research, whom we have just considered, though differing widely in temperament, in training, and in the essential viewpoint from which they approach the subject, will serve to illustrate, in their respective experiences and their own personal conclusions, the present-day status of psychic research.

Two of them — Maeterlinck and James — frankly confess themselves to be still seekers after the truth, as yet unconvinced as to where lies the actual interpretation of the facts they both admit to be genuine — at least so far as any authoritative statement from either man would indicate. These facts may prove to be due to psychic powers in man, not as yet discovered or comprehended by science. On the other hand, they may eventually prove to be due to some discarnate intelligence. Judging from their published statements, their attitude is one of expectant waiting for the disclosure of new facts. Yet for both, the special studies in this field have apparently served to deepen their predisposition or desire to believe in some kind of immortality, and to increase their hope that one day the clearer light may shine. In the case of

James, the "great adventure" has already been entered upon, and he has even now found that "clearer light," or else he has fallen upon eternal sleep.

The other two — Lodge and Hyslop — with equal frankness, confess themselves as clearly convinced that they have found the truth, and on purely scientific evidence. While admitting the possibility of some sort of telepathic hypothesis to explain the facts, they feel completely satisfied that the great preponderance of evidence is on the side of the spiritistic hypothesis; and they both prove the courage and strength of their convictions not only in their private, but in their public utterances as well. With both of them the conviction has come as the result of the cumulative evidence growing out of the investigations of many years. They stand as the open champions of an immortality for man that has been finally proved by strictly scientific methods. That the scientific world has not yet accepted their "proof" as such, does not disturb them. It is only a question of time when it will. Meantime, they believe that the "light" that shines for them is gradually spreading, and that eventually it will fill the whole world with the absolute assurance that death does not end all. Of these two, it is Hyslop who has already essayed the "great experience," so that even now he either knows that his conclusions were correct, or else, he does not care. Maeterlinck and Lodge — one the earnest seeker and one the convinced believer, are still with us, under conditions of time and sense.

These four men, though perhaps better known through their writings and public lectures than many others, are nevertheless typical of all investigators in this field, both trained and untrained in this special work. There are those who, like Lodge and Hyslop, are convinced of the truth of human survival on the basis of the evidence already discovered — perhaps a larger number than has been supposed, since all such



workers have, by no means, given expression to their convictions in public utterances. Then there are those who, like Maeterlinck and James, have been tremendously impressed by the evidence, and yet who remain intellectually uncertain as to the true interpretation of the facts. These doubtless constitute a still larger class. There are also those who appear to be as strongly convinced as are the spiritists that the only explanation of the facts is to be found in the psychic powers of incarnate man, and that discarnate intelligences have nothing to do with the phenomena. Frank Podmore, through his widely read books, is one of the best known representatives of this group, whose numbers are probably smaller than either of the other two.

It would appear that Hyslop, in spite of his saving clause, was making too broad a statement scarcely warranted by the facts, when he says: "History shows that every intelligent man who has gone into this investigation, if he gave it adequate examination at all, has come out believing in spirits." The attitude of James and Maeterlinck would certainly refute such a statement; not to mention others, like Professor Sedgwick, one of the founders and the first President of the English Society for Psychical Research, who said to James the year before his death, that if any one had told him at the outset that after twenty years of investigating these phenomena, he would be in the same identical state of doubt and balance that he started with, he would have deemed the prophecy incredible. The cause of truth gains nothing by exaggeration, and the spiritists do not help their case by claiming more than the clear facts give them.

The simple fact is that there is to-day no unanimity of opinion among the workers in the field of psychic phenomena, except that they are all apparently agreed that trickery and fraud do not furnish the sole or the adequate explanation of many of the phenomena investigated. All the investigators

frankly admit that many of the alleged facts are genuine, but they differ widely as to the meaning and significance of these facts. This by no means proves that the spiritistic hypothesis may not one day generally be admitted to be scientifically true, nor should it in any degree serve to discourage investigations in this field. Let us remember that evolution was proved to be true long before it was generally accepted as a doctrine of science.

What it does mean, however, is that the investigations in this important field are still *in the process* of discovering the truth that unquestionably must lie back of psychic phenomena. That the truth has not yet been disclosed so as to admit of general acceptance is due to various causes — the vastness of the field to be covered, the shortness of the time as yet given to this study, the complexity of the phenomena themselves, the inadequateness of the evidence found, the comparative ignorance of man's inner mental states and of the range of his psychic powers, together with the ingrained conservative tendency of the human mind in accepting any new truth.

In view of these conditions prevailing to-day in the field of psychic research, it is most desirable that there should continue to be the clash of conflicting schools of thought, the conflict of divergent and opposing opinions,— the Podmores and the Lodges, with the Maeterlincks and the Jameses sandwiched in between — all types of temperament and all classes of minds devoting themselves to the ascertainment of the facts in this domain, if only at last the investigations are carried on to their successful issue and the ultimate truth is found. It is only in this way that truth ever comes to be known, and to take its permanent place in the scientific body of ascertained knowledge.

The fact to be kept in mind by all intelligent people to-day — a fact that is by no means appreciated by all interested in the subject — is that the ultimate truth of psychic phe-



nomena is still in the research stage; it has not yet been finally discovered. Some scientific students have reached certain conclusions; others, equally scientific and facing the same identical facts, have arrived at different conclusions; while a larger number still hesitate and are uncertain as to the real meaning of the phenomena. So long as this condition prevails, it cannot be truthfully said that human survival has been scientifically proved, save for certain individuals like Lodge, Hyslop and others. But no more can it be said to have been disproved. The main problem is still in the crucible of inquiry. We may accept any view we choose as a working hypothesis, but our final conclusion of the whole matter must be held in abeyance, in the light of present evidence, that is, if we desire to maintain the scientific attitude. There can be no question but that eventually science will be able to affirm generally and positively, where the real truth lies, unless we are ready to admit that there are some facts that must forever baffle the human mind to explain.

For those who, in their earnest search for more light on the old problem — and there are many such to-day — turn from the perusal of the many books recently published on psychic phenomena and its bearing on immortality, in uncertainty or doubt or misgivings, having failed to find the satisfactory “proof” they sought, the first and greatest need is patience. Most of the books on the subject that deserve to be called scientific are largely taken up with the narrative of experiences and the adducing of evidence that seem to have little meaning and less bearing on immortality to the mind untrained in psychic studies. In addition, most scientific authors are inclined to be non-committal, to say the least, when it comes to the formulation of their own conclusions. As a matter of fact, many of these writers have not arrived at any conclusions as yet, or at least, they are not ready to go on record publicly. Their chief interest, at present, lies in pre-

senting the different lines of evidence for which they feel they can safely vouch, for what they may be worth, leaving the future to draw from this evidence what conclusions it may.

On the other hand, there are many books written in all sincerity but wholly lacking the scientific view-point and spirit. Many times they are the product of some enthusiastic believer, whose zeal is greater than his knowledge, and who knows nothing whatever of the principles underlying psychic investigation, but who has had some "great experience" and hastens to give it to the world. And from such books, the earnest seeker after truth turns away in impatience, if not quite disgust, or else, is left cold and unmoved by the strange mingling of faith and credulity. To all such it must be said frankly and yet with deepest sympathy, there is no single book, no, nor all of them put together, to which one can turn in the certainty of finding the scientific proof, the absolute assurance of survival after death, that will bring satisfaction to the mind and heart of the reader. Such printed proof, if indeed it exists, is yet to be forthcoming.

What one finds in books is the record of strange experiences, more or less mysterious, that may or may not have brought conviction to the writer, but that seldom if ever serve to bring conviction to the reader. For in a question so crucial as this, conviction is only born out of personal experience; it is rarely imparted through the experiences of others. It is safe to say that many of those whom the reading of "Raymond" leaves doubting and incredulous, would be enthusiastic believers if the same or similar experiences should come to them as have come to Sir Oliver Lodge. But even when the personal experience is encountered — even then, all but the most credulous and those who are predisposed to believe, are often strangely inclined to halt between two opinions. This is largely due to the uncertain conditions prevailing in the field of psychic phenomena, as well as to the personal equa-



tion; and in some great measure, it proceeds from the general skeptical temper of the age.

It is only when we attempt to analyze the results achieved since the Societies for Psychical Research first came into existence back in the eighties, that we begin to clearly perceive how much actually has been accomplished in this short space of time; and even though, to the majority of minds, the convincing proof of human survival is still lacking, there can be no doubt of the real progress that has been made toward the ultimate solution of the problem. Let us briefly review what has been accomplished already in this difficult field.

For the first time in human history, the whole question of man's future destiny has been approached in a serious and scientific spirit, with no ulterior motive than that of simply ascertaining the exact facts as to survival after death, if that be a possible thing. From earliest times, these same phenomena that we now call "psychic" have been in the world. All literature of all peoples is full of references to them. They have occupied a foremost place in most of the religions of early times, they shaped the forms and inspired the practices of the secret rites and esoteric beliefs of the ancient "mysteries" of Greece and Rome and of many other peoples, they have furnished the bases for the doctrines of immortality that have held a central place in the more advanced religions of recent times, and yet, strange as it may seem, this whole class of phenomena, from which have arisen such momentous influences in the life of mankind, have been left to the control and exercise of more or less ignorant priests, of unknown and grossly ignorant "mediums," of self-confessed charlatans — in a word, of those who have preyed upon human ignorance and credulity chiefly for the sake of selfish gain.

The modern spiritualists sought to rescue these phenomena from the disrepute into which they had fallen at the hands of ignorant or designing persons, and to elevate belief in them

and in what they signified into a religion. In spite of all the just criticism that can be made, the spiritualistic movement of modern times, not only produced among its leaders a number of noble characters and won many honest disciples in many lands, but it also served to bring these phenomena so prominently and so persistently before the public mind, as to lead at length to the formation of the Societies for Psychical Research. Perhaps this last has been its greatest mission to the world.

From that time down to the present this whole range of phenomena has been taken out of the exclusive control of the ignorant and unscrupulous, and has been seriously studied and examined at the hands of scientific men in all lands. There is profound significance in the fact that men of the scholarly standing of Maeterlinck and James, Lodge and Hyslop, and scores of others who might be mentioned, have deemed the problem of man's future existence of sufficient importance to devote, if not their lives, at least so large a portion of their time to its earnest study. We shall deal more in detail with this significance in a later chapter. It should be a ground of encouragement, however, to all earnest seekers for light, that men — and many women, too — of such character and ability are giving of their best to-day to the solution of the old problem. This fact alone registers a distinct gain both for truth and for human needs.

But again, the work done has served to effectually remove the stigma that formerly attached to the whole realm of the so-called "occult" in human experience, and has elevated the problem of human destiny to a new and higher plane of dignity and importance. When the Societies were first formed to investigate these phenomena, they were met with ridicule and opposition from practically the great majority of the leaders in the scientific world. The Churches generally were scandalized that science should presume to seek for "evi-



dence" in what was so clearly intended to be a matter for faith alone. The early investigators took their scientific lives, as it were, in their hands, as they went forth to explore this new territory.

The opposition has by no means ceased, and in certain quarters both in orthodox science and in orthodox religion, the ridicule and the criticism are still to be heard. But to the credit of the courage of the early pioneers in this "unpopular" field and of those who have come after them, there is a much more tolerant attitude on the part of both science and religion, to speak generally, than ever before. The subject is no longer taboo in intelligent circles as formerly, and it is possible for one to evince an interest in psychic phenomena to-day without the fear of losing his respectability. In fact, the danger to-day is that the subject is becoming almost too popular, and for many people it seems to be more a curious fad than the object of careful and painstaking study.

But the struggle against the unpopularity and disrepute into which the whole subject had fallen has now been won, so that one can honestly express an interest in his soul, and even dare to inquire whether death does end all, without losing the respect of his fellows.

Another tremendous gain has been the amassing by these Societies, through the last thirty years, of a vast amount of data bearing directly or indirectly on the main problem. This material has been painstakingly verified, carefully classified and put in definite order. The field of exploration has been clearly marked off, and the work to be done in the future has been definitely outlined and systematically planned. In fact, the preliminary and necessary work in the founding of a new science has been done, and well done, in preparation for future growth and progress in further discoveries. Just what this preliminary work has involved in a field where everything was in chaos and confusion, is best revealed in that

monumental work by F. W. H. Myers, entitled, "Human Personality."

All of this has naturally taken much time and serves to explain in part why more definite "results" have not yet been disclosed. And yet, to the student in this field, it is amazing how much ground has been covered in the short space of a generation of time. Let us remember that, prior to the formation of these Societies, none of this verified and classified data was in existence; only a strange and mysterious mass of conflicting stories, reports, rumors and conjectures — all of which had first to be run to earth before the actual facts could be known, and thus the real work be begun.

The range of phenomena involved has been proven to be much wider than was originally supposed, and this constitutes another accomplishment for psychic research. At the outset, telepathy, apparitions and mediumship seemed to offer the chief channels for investigation. But gradually many other phenomena have come to be included, as bearing on the subjects of inquiry. So that the territory appropriated by psychic research has finally come to comprise all phenomena that might be explained by hyperæsthesia, whether visual, auditory or tactual, all forms of hysteria, the nature and limits of guessing and chance coincidence; hypnotism, clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychometry; hallucinations, whether subjective or veridical; apparitions, whether visual or auditory; premonitions; mediumistic phenomena of all types; automatic writing in all forms; the physical phenomena of spiritualism, including raps or knockings, table-tippings and telekinesis, or the movement of physical bodies without contact; all phenomena connected with cases of double personality; dreams; as well as the so-called materializations of common fame.

As we have seen, not all of these are of equal value in their direct bearing upon the problem of survival, still, indirectly,



they all lead to a better understanding of the inner life of man — whether its true nature proves to be transitory or permanent. It is the very breadth of the field covered by these complex and seemingly innumerable phenomena that also helps to postpone the ascertaining of more definite “results” for survival.

Then there is the commonness of the phenomena, as James points out. To one inexperienced in such investigations there is the almost universal notion that psychic phenomena are very unusual and exceptional things, to be found only among a very limited class of ignorant or “queer” people. But the work of these societies has demonstrated that they are found everywhere in some form, and are common to all classes of people and all stages of culture.

While it is true that the pronounced psychic type is comparatively unusual, and the clear-cut, so-called “gifts of mediumship” are only met with now and then, still there is scarcely any one, from the hard-headed, practical business man, to the most conservative and orthodox type of woman, who will not, if caught in some unguarded moment of confidence, relate in bated breath some “strange experience” that once came to them, and which they have never been able to explain. The author has listened to scores of such recitals from people whom he never suspected of possessing any such “psychic” powers.

The very wide-spread practice, since the coming of the war, of automatic writing, utterly regardless now of either its meaning or value, by people both old and young, cultivated and ignorant, who never dreamed of exercising such powers before, would indicate clearly that certain forms of psychic power, at least, formerly supposed to be limited to the very few, are possessed in some degree by many people, and the clear inference is that they might be cultivated and developed by practically all, if so desired.

All of which goes to prove that many of the phenomena, though not all, far from being abnormal and exceptional, are perfectly natural and normal expressions of powers, whether psychic or spiritual, that operate in and through human nature. That they are more highly developed in some than in others, does not in any sense prove their abnormal character. Many who have cruelly suffered in the past from being accused of "witchcraft," or "the evil eye," or "black magic," or "devil possession," were only exercising natural powers which, while not at all understood either by themselves or others, are now known to be the expression of forces normal to human nature.

This, in itself, is an inestimable gain. It has already transferred from the realm of the old "supernatural," many hitherto unexplained phenomena and placed them in the realm of the perfectly natural. And if it should eventually be proven that the spiritistic hypothesis is true, then all that man has called the "supernatural" in the past will indeed have become the "natural." The old distinction about which so many controversies have raged will disappear, and the age-old dualism will give place to a higher synthesis.

The tremendous complexity involved in the problem has also been revealed more and more clearly as the work of the societies has progressed. As Professor Sidgwick testifies, it was generally felt that the investigation on the part of scientifically trained men would lead, with reasonable promptitude, to very definite results. But as the work went on, as more minds became interested in the subject and as the evidence of all sorts accumulated, the mystery of the problem became deeper and more complex. While many questions were answered positively, new questions kept constantly arising, for which there seemed to be no satisfactory answer. Theories, conjectures, hypotheses steadily multiplied, but



still the clear and positive proof seemed forever to elude the searchers.

While some professed to have reached conviction, and many others persevered in their search for the truth, there were those naturally who became discouraged and almost felt that the problem was utterly incapable of solution. There are so many different elements entering into the problem, so much uncertainty as to the limits of man's psychic powers, so many difficulties, and often, the utter impossibility of imposing test conditions, so many opportunities for conscious fraud and so large a chance for unconscious self-deception, that only the fully trained and thoroughly expert mind is capable of actually appreciating the complexities of psychic research.

As James says: "I have been tempted at times to believe that the Creator has eternally intended this department of nature to remain baffling, to prompt our curiosities and hopes and suspicions all in equal measure, so that, although ghosts and clairvoyances, and raps and messages from spirits are always seeming to exist and can never be fully explained away, they also seem never to be susceptible of full corroboration."

But it is James also who admits in the same passage that it is impossible to believe that the Creator has put any big array of phenomena into the world merely to mock and defy the human mind; "so my deeper belief is that we psychical researchers have been too precipitate with our hopes, and that we must expect to mark progress, not by quarter centuries, but by half or whole centuries."

These words reveal the truly scientific spirit — patience in investigation, unwillingness to accept inadequate evidence, caution in formulating any conclusion until all the facts are in, and through it all, the sure confidence that eventually the

mystery will be dispelled and the truth found. In just the measure that they possess this spirit, will all intelligent seekers for more light on the old problem be saved from credulous gullibility on the one hand, and from reactionary unbelief on the other. There is no place for dogmatism in any direction, with prevailing conditions in this field as they are to-day.

The elimination of fraud as the sole cause, and the proving of the genuineness of many of these phenomena is still another great accomplishment. This, naturally, was the first step if any progress at all was to be made. The quite general feeling on the part of most intelligent people was that fraud or trickery would explain all so-called psychic mysteries. Herrmann and other professional magicians made their standing offers to duplicate on the stage any of the "tricks of the medium"; and it was popularly inferred that if the magician could produce by confessed trickery the same kind of phenomena exhibited by the medium, the medium must also inevitably and always employ similar trickery. They failed to see that while some of the phenomena on the stage and in the medium's cabinet might be the same in kind, it was at least possible that they proceeded from different causes.

This is just what the investigators have proved. Many mediums have been detected in fraud and their trickery has been exposed. But in many other cases, under the most rigid test conditions that the ingenuity of scientifically trained minds have been able to devise, these investigators have frankly admitted that the elements of fraud or trickery did not, and could not enter in. The same is true of many of the "communications" received through mediums, and of the various other forms of psychic phenomena.

Those who still claim that it is all "bosh," and that some form of fraud or deception underlies all these phenomena — people who have never given a single moment's serious study to the question — must have a very poor idea of the mental



integrity and moral honesty of the scientific investigators who have given twenty or thirty years to this special work, and who confess themselves as absolutely convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena, even though admitting frankly the constant danger of fraud or deception, whether conscious or unconscious. The day has forever gone by for really intelligent minds, however, when fraud can longer be adduced as the explanation of all psychic phenomena.

Still a last conclusion to which all students of the subject have come is the recognition of the presence of something supernormal in many phases of the phenomena, e. g. communications, automatic writing, etc. This seems to be the quite general conviction at which investigators have arrived. But by "supernormal," they in no sense mean "supernatural" in the old sense. What they mean is the presence of knowledge that cannot be traced to the ordinary sources of information, namely, the senses. If telepathy be accepted as scientifically proved, as many do accept it, this fact alone means a revolution in our ideas, for it means that mind can communicate with mind, altogether apart from the senses, through which we have believed all our knowledge was derived.

James and many others are frank in their admission of the presence of such supernormal knowledge in the case of many well-known and rigidly tested mediums. "In really strong mediums," he says, "this knowledge seems to be abundant, though it is usually spotty, capricious and unconnected."

This is as far as the psychic researchers are willing to go, except of course, in the case of those who have become convinced that this "supernormal" knowledge is the result of the activity of discarnate intelligences. And this brings us to the very crux of the problem, as it presents itself to present-day investigators. It also clearly suggests the possibilities of future work in this field.

## CHAPTER VII

### FUTURE POSSIBILITIES — AND A WARNING

“How often have men thus feared that Nature’s wonders would be degraded by being closelier looked into. How often, again, have they learned that the truth was higher than their imagination; and that it is man’s work, but never Nature’s, which to be magnificent must remain unknown.”—*F. W. H. Myers.*

IN considering the possibilities for the future of psychic investigations there is much room for speculation; but this would be purely a matter of personal opinion and would have no value save that of possible suggestions as to what may yet be accomplished along these lines. What we desire to do, is to state as clearly as possible the problem as it presents itself to the psychic investigator of to-day, to point out the possible explanations of the phenomena which psychic researchers generally admit to be genuine, and to indicate some of the conditions that may lead eventually to the general acceptance of some one of the explanations now offered, or to the discovery of some new explanation that will still better and more adequately interpret all the facts.

The main problem before the genuine investigator to-day is the one question: *Does consciousness survive death?* This is primary to all else, and much more fundamental than any other question that may be asked. The trained student is not especially interested in “spiritual” or “astral” bodies, in the conditions of life beyond the grave, in what the departed “spirits” do — what they eat or how they dress or the character of their habitations — or even the conditions under



which they may be able to communicate with the living. It is perfectly possible that the fact of survival may be proved entirely apart from any satisfactory evidence that the dead do communicate with the living, through the scientific establishment of telepathy or some kindred fact, proving that mind can indeed communicate with mind entirely apart from the bodily senses.

Many books have come, and are constantly coming, from the press, filled to the brim with so-called information about the life into which the dead have departed, the conditions of their existence and the nature of their employments. But it must be clearly evident to every intelligent person that all this "information," however much it may be desired, is altogether irrelevant and unconvincing until first of all the fact is established indisputably, that human consciousness does persist beyond the grave. Such "information" may be, and often is, very interesting, and it may even turn out eventually to be true, or at least, some of it may be discovered to harmonize with the facts of the other life; but until the prior fact is unmistakably proven, it can have no evidential value for human survival whatsoever.

For let it be remembered that if one's nearest and dearest should purport to communicate through some medium or through some form of automatic writing, and should discourse however learnedly and beautifully about the conditions of existence in the "spiritual world," it would possess not one grain of evidence for continued existence, for the simple reason that such a communication would contain nothing whatever by means of which the messenger might be identified as being the purported loved one. For all one *knows*, a message of such a character might proceed from the mind of the medium or from one's own sub-conscious being.

In such cases, the only real evidence is that which reveals the mental states of the messenger in such a way as that they

may be known and recognized, beyond the shadow of a doubt, to be those of the one departed. Intimate, personal and often very trivial things serve thus to identify, as glittering generalities never do. And even then, the evidence is not convincing until it has been proved that such mental states or intimate knowledge could not have been obtained through some form of telepathy or mind-reading, or in some more obvious fashion.

The real problem then, is whether this stream of consciousness or particular personality has survived death and still exists in independence of the physical organism, regardless of how it survives or the nature of its present existence. Whatever personal identity may be, we know it is not accessible to sense perception. It is as transcendental as atoms, ether waves, ions, electrons and other supersensible realities of physical science, if indeed there are such.

The solution of this problem lies in the collecting of sufficient evidence to prove that human consciousness does continue after death. The chief difficulty in the way of its solution lies in the strength of the hypothesis that consciousness is a function of the brain and requires some such structure for its existence. Indeed the sensory and materialistic conception is so strong that there are many people who confess frankly that they cannot even imagine how consciousness can survive without a brain.

James's hypothesis of the transmissive function of the brain, in place of the commonly accepted productive theory, is one way to escape the difficulty. Or it may turn out that both hypotheses are wrong, in the light of new discoveries. For it must be remembered that consciousness as a function of the brain, in the sense that it is *produced* by the brain, is itself an *unproved* hypothesis. It is simply used by the majority of scientists as a good working hypothesis, in lieu of anything better.



When one makes sense perception the sole criterion of truth, it is natural to make this assumption, especially when all normal experience shows the constant association of consciousness with a physical organism, and reveals no trace of it when the body is dissolved. But the absence of convincing evidence for survival is not evidence for the absence of survival; hence, only normal experience seems to favor materialism. Supernormal experience, if proved, suggests a very different interpretation of it; it brings us into contact with the supersensible. In normal life, consciousness in all its forms is a supersensible reality, even when we suppose it to be wholly dependent on the physical organism.

The true psychical researcher refuses to believe, as yet, that materialism has said the last word on the problem; he is simply resolved to be as skeptical about materialism as the materialists are about spiritualism. This is the only attitude that enables one to discover the illusions that have affected most of our thinking on this subject. If people generally would only try to understand what psychic research is aiming at, and so disregard the question of a "spiritual" body, or the quasi-material conception of the soul, they would see that the researcher is only trying, at the present stage of investigation, to ascertain if personal consciousness survives as a fact, and not how it survives, and thus they would find the problem very much simplified.

This main problem of the researcher may be stated in a little different way. Death is only slightly different from paralysis or catalepsy, according to appearances. It involves the permanent lapse of consciousness so far as our normal observation is concerned, whereas, in the other cases, consciousness ceases to function and, apparently, for the time being, is non-existent, until it again begins to function within the body. In the case of death, the body also ceases to function and in time is dissolved. The materialist assumes that

personality or consciousness disappears with it, and can never reappear. Believing as he does that personality is a function of the organism, he consistently assumes that it does not exist anywhere after the death of the body. But he does not *know* directly that this is a fact; he simply assumes it to be such. He never saw personality, nor have any of us seen it, as we see our own bodies or the bodies of others; and the materialist assumes that the only way to know anything directly is through sense perception.

In catalepsy and paralysis, personality or consciousness seems to have disappeared. The recovery of normal consciousness in such cases shows that there it suffered only a lapse, followed later by the resumption of organic functions. But there is no such resumption of functions after death, and the materialist therefore concludes that consciousness has become non-existent, like digestion, circulation, secretion and other functions of the organism. These undoubtedly disappear never to reappear; and if personality is a similar function of the body, it too must disappear forever. Since we have no direct knowledge of this personality in others, even in life, and since we cannot from normal experience infer its continued existence after death, we have to fall back upon facts derived from seemingly abnormal conditions or processes different from sensory experience, if we are to infer its survival.

Now psychic research is occupied primarily with the effort to find the facts from which we can justly infer the survival of personality. As we have already pointed out, fraud, sub-conscious actions, chance coincident, guessing and telepathy must be excluded as explanations before we can accept any given evidence as proof of survival.

Assuming that this exclusion has been effected in any case, as in veridical apparitions and test mediumistic phenomena, we can only infer that personality has continued to exist after



death, as we know it existed in paralysis and catalepsy when we had supposed it destroyed. Death has interrupted its causal action in the world; therefore, unless at some point it can resume that causal action on or through the living, we should have to remain without scientific evidence for its continuance after death.

This is why it seems clear that if the scientific evidence for human survival is ever to be found so as to be generally accepted by mankind, it will be through the work and by the methods of psychic research. We are indebted to Doctor Hyslop for the foregoing line of reasoning which we have sought to paraphrase so as to give his argument its full effectiveness.

This being the problem in its main essentials, and admitting that the investigations carried on thus far have succeeded, in many cases at least, in eliminating all conceivable chance of fraud, and proving the phenomena to be genuine facts, what are the possible explanations of these most interesting and seemingly mysterious facts? In general, the hypotheses adduced by the workers in this field to explain these facts fall into one of two different classes.

(1) They may all eventually come to be explained on some theory of telepathy or mind-reading, or through the activity of psychic powers in man, whose nature or operations are not yet understood. On this theory, all these phenomena, even the most mysterious and baffling at present, would ultimately be reduced to purely psychic phenomena, with which incarnate intelligences have nothing whatever to do. This theory may be stated in various different ways, but the above version constitutes the essence of them all. Of course, if this should eventually turn out to be the true theory that adequately accounts for all the facts, we should then have to admit frankly that psychic research had not led us a single step nearer to the scientific proof of human survival. To be

sure, it would have shed much new light on the mysterious nature and undreamed of powers of the inner life of man, but the great question of human destiny, so far as we can see, would remain as deeply shrouded in mystery as ever.

(2) At least some of these genuine phenomena can only be explained on the theory of discarnate intelligence or intelligences, that are actually able, and that do, under certain conditions, communicate in one way or another, with those living in the physical body. This theory does not require that all forms of genuine psychic phenomena must be explained in this way. Many of these phenomena may indeed prove to be purely psychic, that is, due to forces resident in incarnate man. But it does insist that among the phenomena there is a certain residuum of facts, large or small, that cannot only not be explained on the telepathic hypothesis, but that no other possible hypothesis can adequately explain except that of discarnate intelligences. If this second theory should be proven true and come to be generally accepted by science, then indeed it could be truly said that the world had at last found the solution of the age-old problem, and that the scientific proof of survival after death had finally been established.

It has already been pointed out how greatly divided are the ranks of present-day psychic investigators on these two general hypotheses. There are those who are fully persuaded in their own minds that the second theory has already been scientifically proved. There are those who waver and hesitate between accepting either one as the correct hypothesis, preferring still to call themselves researchers, and to await the disclosure of further facts before committing themselves, at least publicly, to any conclusion. And there are some who are still contending vigorously that the telepathic theory is the only really tenable one.

Outside the ranks of the actual psychic investigators them-



selves, it is probably true that the predominance of opinion among scientists generally, where either side is taken, would be in favor of the first theory; although it must be admitted that the opinions of those who know nothing, at first-hand, of the phenomena and who have given no time to their study, cannot possess much value. It is this condition of divided feeling as to the true explanation of these genuine facts, this lack of any general consensus of opinion among scientific minds as yet, that makes it impossible to claim that definite results have been reached as to actual and acceptable proof for either hypothesis.

But very fortunately, the field was never more widely open for further research than to-day, the number of trained investigators is steadily increasing, there is an attitude of greater tolerance toward the subject on the part of the public generally than ever before, any day may see the discovery of new facts that may swing the pendulum of conviction to one view or the other, and at least, the utter chaos and confusion that once existed in this realm of phenomena has given place to an order where definite hypotheses have been able to emerge. As time goes on, these now opposing theories must continue the struggle in the arena of discussion and controversy, either until one of them wins the victory over the other, or until both are superseded by some new and better theory.

In case the telepathic theory should eventually force the surrender of the spiritistic hypothesis, however, there are many who feel that the search for the proof of survival need not necessarily be regarded as lost.

This much is clear: If not in this generation, sometime eventually the truth will be found. And though it is recognized that the time element must play a larger part in the ascertaining of the truth than was at first supposed, still the day must come at length when this whole range of phenomena

will be understood by science, and when it will not longer present the baffling mystery that it does to so many at present.

There are certain conditions existing to-day and that will be increasingly present as time goes on, that did not hold true in the earlier days of these investigations and that promise new hope for future investigation. For example, every year now, more and more of those who have been known as psychic researchers are crossing "the great divide." They are men trained by long experience in all the intricacies of this special kind of investigation; they know all its difficulties and its complexities; they also know from their experience on this side, just what constitute test conditions to the worker here; in addition, they know the character of evidence that would be most sure to furnish the earthly investigator with the satisfactory proof of human survival.

Now if human consciousness does indeed survive, it can readily be seen what this means for psychic research. On the "other side" there is gradually gathering a steadily increasing group of those who are trained and have become expert in this special subject. The natural supposition would be, if consciousness and memory persist as the spiritistic hypothesis contends, that these "spirits" would make every effort to get into communication with their fellow-workers still left on this side of life. And if they succeed, with their knowledge of the kind of evidence needed to furnish the real proof, the assumption is that, in time, better than all others, they may be able to bring, in their communications, just this particular kind of evidence required to definitely solve the problem.

This does not seem like an unreasonable assumption, provided of course the spiritistic hypothesis is the true one, and communication with the departed is possible. It is well known that men like Myers and Hodgson, and it is reported, James and Hyslop, as well as others, arranged with their



friends or colleagues before their deaths, to fulfill certain tests agreed upon, in case they were able to return. Many communications, purporting to have come from these very men, have been received by various mediums. They have brought conviction to some investigators, while others seem to have been left in doubt as to their genuineness. But in time these trained "spirits" may be able to clearly fulfill the tests agreed upon so as to bring conviction to all. It is here again that patience may be the prime condition of further knowledge.

The gradually recognized possibility of what many call normal telepathy, or unconscious mind-reading, from survivors or sitters in the circle, raises hesitation in many minds about accepting such messages as irrefragable evidence of continued personal existence; and to overcome this difficulty, it is demanded that facts shall be given which are unknown to any one present, and which can only subsequently be verified. Communications of this occasional and exceptional kind are what are called by psychic researchers, "more specifically evidential"; and time, and perhaps good fortune, may be required for their adequate reception and critical appreciation.

The more recent development of an elaborate scheme of "cross-correspondence," entered upon since the death of specifically experienced and critical investigators of the Psychical Society, who were familiar with all these difficulties and who have taken strong and most ingenious means to overcome them, seems to be the method holding out most hope for securing adequate evidence to-day. To many it has already made the matter of proof exceedingly crucial, if not altogether final. "The only alternative, in the best cases, is to imagine a sort of supernormal mischievousness, so elaborately misleading that it would have to be stigmatized as vicious or even diabolical."

This method of cross-correspondence is so complex and technical that it is impossible to explain its workings to the lay mind, and it can hardly be appreciated or understood by the non-studious; but it has already furnished some of the most convincing evidence for survival yet obtained. In a word — though it in no sense explains the intricacies of the method — cross-correspondence involves the completion through a second psychic of a message obtained through another, or an increment that is relevant and not given at the first station. It is a method that can only be employed by highly trained experts, and it serves to illustrate — a fact not appreciated by many — how far the real researcher has gone beyond the ouija board and physical phenomena in his inquiry for convincing evidence. The possibilities of this more recent mode of research are limitless.

Then it is not inconceivable that, as time goes on, there will continue to be a collecting of cases and experiences even more striking and far more evidential than anything that is narrated in "Raymond." The results of automatic writing, such as have already been given to the world by William T. Stead, Elsa Barker, Mrs. Curran, Margaret Cameron, May Wright Sewall and many others, will also doubtless continue to multiply, thus helping to increase the cumulative evidence for some sort of a solution of the problem.

It is, again, not unthinkable that with a return of a more spiritual conception of life, and also under the influence of the constantly increasing accumulation of facts in this field, the "intellectual pride and obstinacy" which still stand for many in the way of a just appreciation of the significance of psychic phenomena, may gradually give way to a deeper spiritual perception and clearer insight, which, in turn, may make possible the obtaining of a class of evidence to which the world as a whole is now quite deaf and blind.

Still another possibility, is the coming of a new and



broader attitude on the part of both science and philosophy toward the universe and toward life. If the pendulum should one day swing from the purely mechanistic and materialistic trend of so much of the current science and philosophy toward a more sane and idealistic position; if science would only include in its study all of the facts, those of the inner life as well as those of the outer world; and if philosophy would resolve once again to take a more comprehensive view of reality than is to be found in its most modern phases, then indeed there would be new grounds for hope that more complete justice would be done to human needs and aspirations.

These last reflections may be in the nature of pure speculations, but whatever their value, it still remains true that the future is big with promise of new discoveries along all lines, from whose benefits it is safe to assume the spiritual nature of man will not be excluded.

A final word must be said, and that by way of warning. It may not be heeded, but it needs to be said nonetheless. With the steady widening of interest in the subject during the war, and especially since, all kinds and conditions of men and women in this country, in England and, we are told, in the continental countries, have "gone in" for various forms of psychic investigations, and in almost incredible numbers. The ouija board manufacturers have done a thriving business, the mediums are working overtime, while the devotees of automatic writing are legion.

With many, this "new interest" amounts practically to an obsession; with still more it has become a fashionable habit, while with others it is only a curious fad. It has been reported that in many of the colleges, studies are being neglected for the ouija board, and the writer knows of loyal church members who are devoting the time on Sundays, formerly spent at church services, in "getting" automatic

writing in their own homes. In its more superficial phases, this popular interest in psychic investigations really amounts to a wave of hysteria sweeping through the world, to be explained in part, but not wholly, by the war-psychology.

Under such conditions, too great emphasis cannot be placed upon the fact that the work of psychic investigation is pre-eminently the work for trained, scientific minds and not for amateurs. It is especially the task of the expert psychologist, for the particular phenomena it deals with belong to his special field of study. Only such minds are capable of dealing intelligently with the peculiar difficulties and the profound complexities of such problems. All others are only playing with something they do not understand, however serious they may think themselves to be — something that, in the nature of things, they are utterly incapable of understanding without this expert training. And thus to play unintelligently with mysterious forces, the a-b-c of which one does not even understand, regardless of whether they proceed from subconscious depths within one's own being or from discarnate intelligence, is a serious thing, and may lead to incalculable harm in more ways than one. It is difficult to explain all that this warning involves, unless one is experienced along these lines.

There is no question but that there are many intelligent people who are sufficiently well-balanced mentally, and possessed of a strong enough fund of commonsense, not to be carried off their feet or to lose the true perspective of things by such "experimenting." For these, there may be little or no danger, though, as has been said, without the special mental training required for this work, the "results" they obtain will be of little real value to themselves or to others, simply because they lack the proper mental equipment to rightly interpret these "results." And the whole question is just this: What do these mysterious facts actually mean?



But the tragic fact is that there are many more who do lose their mental, and oftentimes, their moral balance under the influence of these strange forces. One does not have to step out of the immediate circle of his acquaintances to find those — men and women — who have become so absorbed by their “experiments,” as to lose their grasp on daily duties, become neglectful of immediate tasks, and become blind, perhaps unconsciously, both to the obligations and the opportunities involved in the most sacred and intimate relations of life. Such cases are known to all.

If one’s thought of the future life enables one to live a stronger, braver, richer, truer and more unselfish life here and now, it is a good thing. On the other hand, if it tends to make one more self-absorbed, careless and neglectful of those duties that lie nearest, if, in any sense, it subtracts or alienates one from the immediate interests, opportunities, and obligations of the life that now is, it is always a harmful thing.

For most inexperienced and untrained investigators, the final result of this “experimenting” is either one of two things. If they are credulous and easily influenced, they become foolishly gullible, swallowing bait, hook and line, and believing everything they see and hear at its seeming face value. On the other hand, if there is more of the “natural doubter” in them, they soon become disgusted at their inability to fathom the mysteries, and eventually react, sometimes violently, against all belief in a future existence, and often in religion itself. Both positions are unjustifiable and unnecessary. But, nevertheless, these are the common results, because so few people are trained to examine intelligently the facts or to discriminate carefully as to their true meaning. And thus psychic phenomena and the whole subject of survival are brought into disrepute, and the true value of these investigations is discredited.

A still more dangerous influence follows from the mistaken notion that mediumship is a desirable thing to possess. The writer has heard many women and even young girls speak quite honestly of their great desire to cultivate in themselves the "gifts of mediumship," as if these powers marked necessarily a higher stage in "spiritual" development. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The powers of mediumship have nothing whatever to do with true spiritual life. We find them oftentimes associated with degraded and immoral personalities; and it is not difficult to-day to understand why this should be so.

A real "medium" is one who, for the time being, is under the control of some other force than his or her own conscious will. It may be a psychic force or it may be a spiritual intelligence, sometimes it even may be something of both. But the essential thing is that the medium has surrendered conscious self-control, in order to become a "medium." Few people realize what this involves. The fundamental, inalienable right of every being is to preserve his own will inviolate; it is his fundamental duty as well. Any weakening of one's self-conscious powers of volition, any surrender of one's self-control to any other personal or impersonal forces, even for the time being, always tends toward the weakening and deterioration of one's own mental life and moral character.

Conscientious physicians who practice the use of hypnotism in their treatment of patients have learned this from experience, and no longer employ this means except in extreme cases; many of them have abandoned it altogether on the ground that its benefits are far outweighed by its evil results. Now mediumship is only a form of hypnotism, in which the control of oneself is deliberately given over, temporarily, not to a reputable physician who understands what he is doing, but to a force or power which is not yet clearly understood.



It may be a force that rises out of the depths of one's subconscious being. But we know to-day that there are evil tendencies and dangerous influences and, sometimes, even what we call "dual" or "split personalities" lurking in those mysterious depths, along with many good and desirable things. And to surrender one's conscious self-control in trance conditions, or in any other form of mediumship, including automatic writing where one must at least cultivate passivity, is to fling wide the door for the entrance into one's inner life of all these strange forces both good and bad. If the evil forces are in the ascendancy, and the practice of mediumship is persisted in, it usually leads to what is recognized to-day as "obsession," and very often results in moral degradation or mental insanity.

The statement has been made that fifty per cent. of the inmates of the insane asylums are there because of unconscious mediumship which has left them the tragic victims of all sorts of strange and alien psychic forces. Conscious self-control is the one and only safe guardian of the citadel of the inner life from all such malign influences both within and without.

If, on the other hand, the power that controls in mediumship is a discarnate intelligence, the danger is not eliminated thereby. For all kinds of mentalities and characters, in all stages of development, are constantly passing through the portals of death, and there is no reason to think that, in their essential traits, they undergo any sudden or miraculous change. So that if this be the true hypothesis, the surrender of one's self-control to discarnate intelligences means, once again, flinging the door wide open for all sorts of beings — good, bad and indifferent spirits — to enter and take possession of one's inner life. As some one has truly put it, it is the same thing as going to bed at night in the great city, where all kinds of characters abound, and leaving the

front door wide open. It is possible that no one with evil intent might pass that way or enter the house; and yet again, such an one might enter the defenseless house to rob or even to kill; at any rate it would be taking a chance.

The essential thing to realize is that the surrender of one's self-control, under any conditions, to another person or force, whether good or bad, is always a most undesirable thing to do — it is nothing less than a crime against oneself. Everywhere else in life we hold the ideal of mental self-poise and self-control to be the very highest attainable, then why should it be surrendered in the quest of truth or a higher spiritual development?

These considerations may seem quite meaningless or beside the mark to those who have had no experience in this field. But if the reader desires to pursue this line of reasoning farther, he is referred to a significant book, entitled, "The Great Psychological Crime," by T. K., in which the author, while fully persuaded of the facts of survival and of spirit communication, designates the method of mediumship as altogether negative and totally destructive, and therefore never to be cultivated in oneself. He also suggests what he calls the positive or constructive method of arriving at the truth.

In the case of those in sorrow, who are longing for some real evidence of the survival of loved ones, it is difficult to give these warnings as emphatically as they deserve to be made to people generally. Circumstances must alter cases, and the type of mind of the individual seeking comfort and light will have much to do with it. Only to all such, one would say: Be cautious. Select your medium, if you go to one, very carefully, and only after you have ascertained from those who really know, the medium's actual standing and ability. The world is full to-day of those who are being duped and fleeced by unscrupulous persons who prey upon the experience of human bereavement. And if you must in-



investigate for yourself, be sure to guard most zealously your mental balance and your own self-control.

But we must repeat, with all possible emphasis, the work of psychic investigation is peculiarly the work of the trained expert, and the valuable results for the world will come through his efforts. The rest of us must learn to be content to await his verdict.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE AGE AND PSYCHIC RESEARCH

"During the past century progress has lain chiefly in the domain of the mechanical and material. The progress has been admirable, and has led to natural rejoicing and legitimate pride. It has also led to a supposition that all possible scientific advance lies in this same direction, or even that all the great fundamental discoveries have now been made. But it is rational to take a more comprehensive view."—*Sir Oliver Lodge.*

AFTER the preceding survey of the motives and aims of Psychic Research, of its problems and methods, its accomplishments thus far and its future possibilities, it still remains for us to inquire into the broader significance of the widespread interest to-day in the general subject regarded as a whole, that is, as relating to the future destiny of man.

We may affirm that the original cause of the awakening of such general interest in the subject goes back to the eighties, when the English and American Societies for research in this field first came into existence. There is no doubt that these Societies, with their published Journals and "Proceedings," together with the reports of individual workers that have appeared from time to time, have served as no other single cause in the arousing of interest among large numbers of intelligent people who were, formerly, either ignorant of, or indifferent to, the whole realm of psychic phenomena.

But the question still remains: What brought these Societies into existence at this particular time? Was it chance merely, or were there deeper causes at work? If these Societies were the cause of awakening interest, were they them-



selves, in turn, not the effect of underlying influences that were perhaps not apparent at the surface? When the whole scientific world, with a few exceptions, was either utterly indifferent, or even hostile, to the idea of continued existence, and looked with horror on all forms of spiritualistic phenomena, what conscious or unconscious motive led that little company of scientific men to brave the ridicule and criticism of their colleagues and the anathemas of religious orthodoxy, and organize the first Societies for psychical research? The full significance of psychic research cannot be determined until we first have attempted to answer these more obscure questions.

Or we may claim, as many do, that the well-nigh universal interest in a future existence to-day has been occasioned by the loss of millions of lives through the war, and the consequent loneliness and sorrow that now fill multitudes of human hearts — losses so great numerically and extending to so many countries, that the incalculable amount of human grief has resulted in a wave of hysterical thought and emotion that is sweeping through this sorrow-stricken world, desperately seeking assuagement in some new assurance that the dead have not died; and thus, that all this “abnormal” interest in the subject is an inevitable part of the war-psychology. In time, as the war recedes into the background of history and people move further away from their personal losses, the sorrow that now fills the world will lose the keenness of its biting edge, men and women will once again become absorbed in the things of time and sense, and the unusual interest in another life will naturally wane.

All this is certainly true, but is it all the truth? Every war, through the losses it inflicts, has always tended for a time to turn the attention of those who have suffered most, away from purely mundane pursuits and interests. It would be strange indeed if the greatest war in history should not

produce similar results. And yet the question persists: Is this interest in super-earthly subjects more general to-day than ever before? Is it exactly similar to such interest following other wars; or do new elements now enter in that have not formerly existed?

May it possibly be true that there is a "something new" coming to birth in the soul of humanity, something that, in its beginnings, antedates the war and, yet, that has been tremendously accentuated and accelerated by all that the war has involved — something more truly spiritual in human life than what has been, only just emerging into consciousness, but dimly perceived as yet — strange stirrings that are felt but not at all understood, dumb gropings, vague yet real aspirations toward a something better, higher and more satisfying, than man has ever known?

Such a view becomes more plausible when we remember that the new interest in these matters was awakened and the work of these Societies was begun a generation before the war took place. The fact is that the war has only immensely deepened and widened an interest in the subject that had long since come to exist in many thoughtful minds throughout the civilized world. Hence it must be clear that the war is not alone responsible for this "new interest," and with the fading of the war and its sorrows into the background of memory, it may be assumed that "the something" awakened in the life of humanity need not wholly disappear.

May it not be possible that this groping for more light on the part of so many people to-day, amid the dim twilight of psychic phenomena, this present centering of attention on the matter of the mere evidence for survival after death, constitutes in reality but the first crude and blindly attempted efforts of man to achieve for himself a more genuinely spiritual life here and now, to attain to an immortality that shall not consist merely of a quantity of endless years, but of a



quality of heart and soul and mind, inwrought into human life in this world — a conscious attainment, while still living under the limitations of time and sense?

Is it altogether inconceivable that the real impelling motive lying back of scientific investigation and popular experimenting in this field, is deeper and far more significant than simply to ascertain the truth about human survival, that even many of the trained investigators are but very dimly conscious that their work, in reality, has to do with such far-reaching results for man's life here upon the earth that the mere fact of survival, taken by itself, will eventually seem to be of minor importance? In other words, may it not prove to be true, that the fact of human survival, if it be a fact, is not an end in itself, but the means to a vastly larger conception both of life and of immortality?

It is not at all unreasonable to believe that out of all the vague, yet earnest, gropings of to-day for more light on the old problem, there may come at length such a clear-cut appreciation of those moral and spiritual values which are not of time but of eternity, such a deep and habitual realization of the possibility of bringing one's life into harmony with these eternal values here and now, so real and constant a consciousness of one's true immortality in this present world, that the question as to the scientific proof of the survival of personal identity after death would become of minor interest. This much is clear, unless psychic research does lead eventually to such real ends, it will have accomplished little for the higher life of man or for the true progress of the race, whatever may be the nature of its final conclusions.

But before these questions can be clearly answered and the full import of such considerations be understood, it is necessary that we briefly review the age that has brought psychic research into existence.

One of the most remarkable books that has ever been pub-

lished came from the press in 1918. It is entitled, "The Education of Henry Adams." Its significance lies not only in its contents, but even more in the person of the author who tells the story of his own life after reaching seventy years of age. Henry Adams was of the very essence of New England. His great-grandfather was John Adams, second President of the United States; his grandfather was John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the United States; his father was Charles Francis Adams, Minister to England during the critical years of the Civil War; his brother was the first President of a great transcontinental railroad. This Henry was a scholar. He edited the *North American Review*, he wrote a half a dozen works on American political affairs, he taught mediæval history at Harvard College. Then, near the close of his comparatively uneventful years, he put "The Education of Henry Adams" into form. This book will live, not because it is the story of the life of Henry Adams, but because it records in this typical experience the tragic drama of the last century.

The story of his life is the drama of his attempt to find the reality that forever eludes him, to discover the truth that he cannot see. He goes through the cycle of the New England culture that was based on eighteenth century rationalism. Its behavior and morals were preëminently political. Its Bible was the Constitution, interpreted according to its varying economic moods. Upon this political culture was overlaid the liberal culture of England and the classical world. But the time comes at length when Adams discovers that these do not apply to the world in which he lives. Then he turns to modern science and faithfully follows its trail from Darwin to Poincaré, but in the end he is again disappointed. He even turns away at last from the Dynamo of modern science toward the Mediæval Virgin whom he wistfully envies, for she at any rate seemed to generate real power.



A whole century of discovery, of speculation, of frenzied fidelity to fact brings him at length to what he calls a "barred threshold" which he cannot pass, and yet a threshold which he vaguely feels must lead to a new religion. And in his last chapters, this rationalist and skeptic, this close student of political and physical science, speaks almost in the tones of a mystic of old. One does not sense in the book what lies beyond this threshold toward which Adams' experience has led him; and yet, one knows instinctively that he calls his life a failure simply because he has somehow missed the spiritual meaning and failed to discern the spiritual ends of life. The whole book is thus a cry for the new gods, a reaching out for the new spiritual values which Adams cannot see, but which he knows must exist somewhere.

The experience of Henry Adams is the experience of the nineteenth century. It has been the century of industrial civilization and of modern science. It has been dominated by the machine and the laboratory. It began with man inventing the machine and discovering the methods of the laboratory; it ends with man the helpless slave of what his own mind and hands have builded. With eager enthusiasm he sought to discover *things*, and make *things*, until at last his true life has been dwarfed and stifled by the multitude of mere things his ingenuity has produced. The industrial age has given us a materialistic philosophy, a mechanistic science and a commercialized view of life that have sapped the vitality of all our idealisms. All the old religious creeds have been dissolved by the acids of the laboratory, and since then, the theologians have been following blind alleys with no vision of the Great Word which should bring abundant life to men. All our moral ideals, sooner or later, have gone to pieces on the machine, and men grope in uncertainty today for the broken fragments that remain.

At the time of the Civil War, this civilization reached its

nadir here in America. It was then that two great voices were heard — Walt Whitman and Abraham Lincoln. They were not of the past but of the new and unborn future. They stood forth as innovators, as explorers, as the prophets of a new and better order of things. Whitman sang of a spiritual democracy, springing from the depths of the human consciousness; while Lincoln lived and died for all the people, simply as people. But they were voices crying in the wilderness. America was not ready to hear, much less to understand, their profound message. And so we made of one a mere eccentric; and we took the homely features and awkward form of the other and made an idol of them, utterly missing the greatness of his soul. After the Civil War we plunged as a nation into a wild orgy of selfish exploitation and reckless greed that made us appear to be great and strong and prosperous, but that left us infinitely poorer in the things of the mind and heart and soul.

What was true of America was also true of Europe. During this wonderful development of modern industrial civilization, we had been building a huge, gigantic body, curiously complex and subtly intricate in all its various parts — a body so complex and intricate as to require the most delicate and sensitive guidance on the part of its controlling spirit, if harmony and peace were to be preserved. It is just at this point that there lies revealed the fatal weakness of modern civilization. We had developed by means of science and the industrial system a gigantic body for our civilization, but the guiding intelligence, the controlling spirit, the animating soul of this huge and complex body was the merest pygmy. We had neglected and well-nigh forgotten the fact that the body needed an equally great and informing spirit. And at last, it was inevitable — this soulless body, this vast machine which we had builded and which we called Civilization, like



some Frankenstein monster, turned in destructive fury upon humanity.

But at last the scales have fallen from our eyes and we know that, in spite of the abundance of the things we possess, we are poverty stricken in all that makes life worth the living. In all our striving to gain and possess and amass for ourselves, both as individuals and as nations, we are beginning to realize at last that we have missed the supreme thing — life itself, without which all things are meaningless — the life that means *being* rather than *having*, the life that is appreciation and sympathy and joy and helpfulness. We may indeed have gained the whole world — of things — but we have lost the priceless art of living and loving — “the life that is life indeed.”

Under these conditions the deeper significance of the widespread interest in the things of another life, as expressed through psychic research, must begin to be apparent. The age, by its practical materialism, its absorption in the things of time and sense, its greed for power and wealth, its indifference to human needs, its blindness to moral ideals, its worship of Force, has left the spirit in man stripped and barren of all that gives meaning and value to life. Man has been shut up in a purely physical universe by a materialistic science, from which there seems to be no outlet for his deepest aspirations. He has been told by a mechanistic psychology that he himself is only an intricate machine and will perish with the body. In his daily life and work he has been treated as if he were only a machine by an industrial system that has well-nigh lost all sense of human values. And when he turns to religion, he is met far too often by a traditional theology, most of whose dogmas appear to him either obsolete or meaningless.

Man knows himself to be a living, breathing, thinking,

willing, hoping, fearing, loving, aspiring being. Something deep within tells him he is not the body, and may not be dependent upon the body for existence. He dreams dreams and sees visions, and in the depths of his soul he hears voices — intuitive voices — that are neither explained away nor yet explained by present-day science or religion. He admits that he is only a cog in the wheel of our social life, and he knows that at any time he may be called out to become "food for cannon," yet he aspires most earnestly towards freedom — a freedom to be himself among other free selves — the self he knows he can be, if that freedom is ever gained.

Man cannot express himself clearly. His deepest is as yet inarticulate. But back behind all the surface unrest of modern life are countless men and women who feel that they are being stifled and dwarfed in all the higher ranges of their beings and that their lives are becoming narrower and poorer and more mechanical under the conditions of to-day. The human soul feels itself outraged by all our materialistic philosophies and our mechanistic sciences and our fossilized creeds, and man's entire spiritual nature rebels against the bars of the prison house which the spirit of the age has fashioned. Amidst all the confusion and chaos that prevail, man knows not where to turn for his ideals, but at the same time he knows that he must find the real ideals somewhere, and live his life by them, or else his existence will become utterly empty and worthless.

The deepest need to-day everywhere is for a clear grasp upon the eternal moral and spiritual values of life, amid all that is crumbling and passing away. And men and women everywhere, whether they know it or not, are reaching up faltering hands toward such ideals, are more or less vaguely seeking a more spiritual conception of life that shall make possible a truth and a freedom they know not now, are



earnestly craving the light that shall enable them to see the invisible behind the visible, the unseen within the seen.

This is the real, though often inarticulate, demand made by the human spirit to-day. The age has lost its grip on eternal values, it has become blinded to ideals, it has made of life a vast machine, and psychic research furnishes the opportunity, though by no means the only one, by which many feel they may regain those things of which they have been bereft by the spirit of the age in which they live. Whether they realize it or not, the psychic researchers of every variety are really seeking for the assurance that man is a spiritual being, living in a spiritual universe, whose true ideals belong not to time but to eternity.

As the Freudian school of psychoanalysis would explain it, the age in which we have been living has tended to suppress the instinctive, natural desires of man to experience a spiritual freedom, to attain a moral stability and to realize a sense of something permanent and of infinite value within himself. The practical philosophy, the low ideals and the selfish motives that dominate the age have all tended to limit the normal satisfaction of these instinctive human needs, that are as deep as life itself, and to stultify man's expression of his natural moral aims and spiritual aspirations. And in this field of psychic research there are many who honestly think they have found an outlet for what has been suppressed in them for so long.

No one can read carefully the writings of men like Maeterlinck or James or Lodge or Hyslop, and their kind, without coming to feel that they have been impelled to devote time and energy to the search for facts in this particular field, not merely for the sake of the ultimate truth of survival after death, but because of the bearing of this truth on man's moral and spiritual life here upon earth. It is a more spiritual

conception of life as a whole, that Maeterlinck is clearly seeking. The same thing is profoundly true of James. Lodge adds to this what he feels may prove to be a revitalizing influence upon a moribund religion; while Hyslop goes still further in pointing out what he regards as its practical bearing upon politics and the economic structure of society. Such writers are consciously giving expression, through their interest in psychic research, to human needs and desires, in themselves as well as in others, which they feel have been denied and suppressed by so much of current science and philosophy, and especially by the general spirit of the age.

Other workers in this field, who may not have expressed themselves so fully or frankly, as to the broader implications of their studies, have nevertheless been impelled, more or less consciously, by the same motive of justifying and setting free, if possible, the instinctive spiritual hungers of man. While the many untrained "experimenters," who have never stopped to analyze their motives and who think they are merely seeking evidence for survival, or striving to get into communication with some loved one, are in some sense being moved by the same instinctive, though inarticulate, desire to achieve and realize for themselves a larger spiritual experience.

In an age that has thus tended to deny the deepest needs of the human spirit, and that has belittled and disparaged and suppressed the moral and spiritual aspirations of man, the work of the psychic researcher was not only inevitable but imperative.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE ETHICAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PSYCHIC RESEARCH

“Dawn, shadow, evening, space and stars;  
What night  
Hides in its veils or shows forth mistily,  
Add to their exaltation; they who live  
In love, live also in Eternity.”

— *Emile Verhaeren.*

MANY are the voices being raised to-day, in tones strident or more persuasive, telling mankind what is wrong with the world; and numerous indeed are the books coming constantly from the press of all lands, attempting to analyze “the present situation,” either preaching confidently the virtues of some cherished panacea for the ills that afflict humanity, or suggesting more cautiously the clews to the many problems which must be solved before civilization can find the way out of the blind *impasse* in which it now finds itself. The various theories — political, economic, industrial and religious — which are being offered as the way out, are legion; each one represented by bold champions and staunch adherents, and each claiming to possess the only key that will unlock the door to the progress of the future.

Still the murky darkness that fills the sky is not dispelled; the difficulties in the pathway of progress steadily multiply and the great problems remain unsolved. The world is languishing in pain and sorrow, is filled with struggle and strife, is embittered by prejudice and hatred. An unrest deeper and

more ominous than the world has ever known before, surges to and fro in the life of all peoples. Race is pitted against race, imperialistic powers are contending feverishly for supremacy, subject peoples are struggling fiercely for the right of self-government and the freedom to live their own national lives unmolested, while within the nations, capital and labor, employer and employee, grapple in a life and death conflict; and those who remain outside of these opposing groups either look on, helplessly indifferent, or else are filled with a deepening impatience and disgust with the conditions under which they are compelled to live their lives.

In a sense the world has always known struggle and sorrow, strife and pain; perhaps in some form, it always will know them. For struggle and its inevitable consequents — pain and disappointment — are essential parts of the price we all must pay for living in a world that is still in the process of making; they constitute the inseparable conditions of progress and development both for the individual and for society; they give zest and value and meaning to life. A world without any kind of struggle would be a dead and stagnant world, from which real men and women would recoil in horror.

But while this is admitted frankly, it is also profoundly true that the struggle and unrest of to-day, which the war did not begin and which the formal peace has not ended, betoken changes that are inevitable, point to an advance that is imperative in the organized life of humanity. To all thoughtful minds everywhere it is becoming increasingly evident that things-as-they-have-been must give place to things-as-they-are-to-be. We stand at a clear parting of the ways.

No one would be foolish enough to claim however that present-day problems are easy of solution, and it is certainly true that there is no one panacea that will cure all the ills from which the world is suffering; there is no easy escape from the blind alley into which the age has led us. It is not



as simple as some of our theorists would have us believe. But if the past has any one truth to reveal more clearly than another it is, that no problem is ever solved until it is solved right, that is, in accordance with the right; and that the only safe and dependable guiding stars in this period of shadowy uncertainty and chaotic confusion are the eternal ideals of sincerity and truth, of freedom and liberty, of justice and right, of good-will and human brotherhood.

And the tragedy of our age — all its ignorant stupidity and muddle-headedness, its pathetic blindness and willful cruelty, its brutal selfishness and utter disregard for the common humanities, its easy surrender of fundamental liberties and its cold indifference to primary social duties and obligations — let us confess it honestly — is due to the fact that for so many, the clear shining of these eternal ideals has grown dim and has even faded into the garish light of a commonplace and superficial day, and that all of us, in some degree, have lost our grasp upon those fundamental principles of righteousness and truth and love, apart from which all human problems must remain forever insoluble.

This is the sorry legacy bequeathed to us by all the materialistic philosophies and mechanistic sciences and traditional theologies and selfish individualisms of an age, great in its physical discoveries, its mechanical inventions and its industrial revolution, but increasingly anæmic spiritually, and pitifully weak and small in its sense of the supreme moral values of life. To all who have eyes to see and hearts to understand, this has been the deepest revelation of the war. And to regain our vision of, and our grasp upon, these supreme values of life is the primary task of the new age that now dawns upon the world.

There may be those who resent the statement that our age has lost the great ideals. The fact is that the names remain with us, while the all-compelling truth within the name has

well-nigh lost all its power. Of course, we still talk and write and preach about these ideals, but they are mere poetic sentiments to most of us, beautiful mottoes that we hang upon the wall and then turn our backs upon. They are not incorporated into the inmost being of life and character; they have not been inwrought into the warp and woof of our manhood and womanhood; and we seldom see their application to the social conditions under which we live. Not many of us would make even an inconsiderable sacrifice for their sake; we would not dream of dying for them, much less face the unpopularity and social ostracism that might be involved in living them out frankly before all men.

It may not be perceived at first glance just how the movement inaugurated by psychic research is rendering a service, to the renaissance of moral idealism. Let us consider this phase of the subject more carefully.

The impatience which many sincere minds have felt with the subject of immortality in general, has arisen from two sources. First, the tendency that the interest in a life after death has exhibited, in many cases, to produce an "other-worldliness," that is, a lessening of interest in the duties and privileges of the life that now is, and an undue emphasis upon some future existence. And, second, the failure to realize that ethical distinctions must hold an essential place in any reasonable conception of immortality, and a consequent tendency to disregard the influence of moral values in "another life." These are serious charges if true, and in many instances they have been all too true. But the criticism does not apply to the truth of immortality, but rather to the imperfect way in which it has often been held, or the unworthy form in which it is presented. One's belief in the fact of survival need not serve to subtract one's interest and energy from this present world. It may, and often does, tend to infuse all of one's life here with a new and nobler quality —



a greater earnestness and a more considerate and unselfish feeling for others. Which result it has, in any given case, depends on the right or wrong use one makes of the fact.

The traditional theological doctrines of Heaven and Hell, together with the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, grew out of an instinctive recognition of the permanency of moral values, even after death. They were for centuries mighty symbols, bearing witness not through their literalness but through their poetry, to the eternal ethical distinctions of life. With the loosening of the hold of these old doctrines, in their literalness, upon the modern mind, men have forgotten the truth to which they testified; and with the blurring of moral ideals here in this earthly life, the life to come has often been pictured as lacking in all moral distinctions. To the morally developed man or woman, such a life would have little meaning and less attractions. Such flabby conceptions have figured largely in modern preaching, and it serves to explain the falling away from the churches of so many ethically minded people.

Psychic research, not so much through its leaders as through its great mass of amateur "experimenters," has also tended to forget moral values, through its absorption in many details connected with questions of proof and identification, and also through the trivial nature of so many of the purported communications. But it cannot be too emphatically stated, that there can be no real gain for humanity in the scientific proof of survival, unless that proof also carries with it the clear realization of ethical distinctions in the "other life," a realization so keen that it must react for good upon the moral and practical life of men here on earth. Let us suggest, more specifically, some of the moral and social implications which lie at the heart of the impulse back of psychic research, and which should be emphasized with greater force and clearness by all interested in the subject.

If psychic research promises anything to the world, it holds out the hope of eventually throwing light upon the nature and destiny of the human soul, and of doing this by the scientific method instead of by pure speculation or faith. If it succeeds in its supreme quest, let us see what it will mean.

It will make inevitable the revival of the importance of spirit and mind in nature, where now the prevailing tendency is to see only matter and force, and where all mental states are reduced to an attribute of matter organized in a particular way. This is fundamental to any high idealism, as it means a larger universe than that perceived by our senses — larger, not in a quantitative but in a qualitative sense, where faith and hope and love and aspiration have as real a place as eyes and ears and nose and hands — a universe in which ideal things have an actual existence. If this “knowledge” should be attained, it will have far greater power to uphold moral agencies and inspire moral strivings than had the belief in immortality in the past, for it will possess an efficacy that can never attach to a belief not so assured.

Equally fundamental is the value that would be placed on human personality, if it should be unquestionably demonstrated that man has a soul, and that his soul persists after death. An age in which the great teachers have been laying increasing stress upon the supremacy of human personality as the goal of the entire evolutionary process, the one reality possessed of limitless possibilities and of infinite worth, is also the age, strange as it may seem, that holds human life so cheap as to regard millions of individuals as mere things, treat them like commodities, drive them like machines, and send them in vast armies to become food for cannon; an age that has so little reverence even for its loftiest souls, its “pure idealists,” as to shut them up in prison for months and even years, when their only crime has been their refusal to violate



the voice of conscience sounding in the depths of their own souls —“ of whom the world was not worthy.”

The subordinate place that the individual held in the life of antiquity is familiar to all. As an individual, he counted for nothing. The social system took no account of the importance of personality, and of our duty to reverence it, simply as such, everywhere. Those in power, both the ruling and the priestly classes, were at liberty to exploit the rest of mankind as they pleased. But the ideal teachings of Jesus created a new social standard, based upon the nature and worth of each individual soul, and our responsibility toward it. Down through the centuries, this belief in the intrinsic worth of each individual, because in every being there dwelt a something imperishable, has struggled for recognition; and gradually, in just the measure that men have accepted this truth, life has become more humane and kindly, more unselfish and mutually helpful. Education has been brought within the reach of all, innumerable opportunities for self-development have been created, and countless missionary and philanthropic agencies have been set in motion, all because of the belief in the intrinsic worth of the individual, simply as such.

The materialistic reaction of the last half-century, however, has threatened this conception with extinction, as is apparent in the new imperialism that has risen and in the contempt for other races that has naturally followed. We no longer feel the racial sympathy felt by the early missionaries, or the sense of the unity of the human race created by our obligation to share the truth and the blessings we enjoy with even the poorest and meanest of earth. We have adopted morals that threaten our own race with extinction, and then fear or despise those races that promise to take our place. The ruthless exploiters of subject peoples or weak races give the lie to the professed beliefs of “Christian” nations, while

the all too-general exploitation of the worker, under our present industrial system, which no amount of sophistry, or evasion or apology can longer conceal to-day, only proves how low and cheap the estimate we place in practice upon individual human lives.

Now suppose that the whole question of the intrinsic worth of the individual were taken out of the realm of pious belief or poetic sentiment and placed upon a scientific basis. Suppose it could be proven, beyond the shadow of any doubt, that Nature, or the God of Nature, prizes personality far too highly to ever let it be wholly lost. Suppose it could be proven, not just believed, that each one — the despised "dago" and "hunkie" and "chink" and "nigger" and "sheeny," as well as those who boast of their blue blood and culture — must go on after death, whether they want to or not, and that the life there is lived in obedience to the great law of cause and effect — that what we sow here we must reap there — that the moral values of life hold inexorably; I say, suppose this could be positively known as a fact, so that men and women everywhere had been forced to accept its truth. And furthermore, suppose it were proved that our social, or unsocial, conduct here, actually limited and injured our soul's life after death — a thought that never enters into our calculations now — and that by the law of reaction or retributive justice, all the social wrongs we commit here, consciously or unconsciously — our exploitation of others, our indifferent selfishness, our scorn and contempt — would in some form be visited upon ourselves in that "other life." If these facts could be proven true and men generally accepted them as such, we should not only have the clew to the solution of the industrial problem, but of all our social and international problems of to-day. For the reverence of all other individuals, equally with ourselves, would mean the beginning of the reign of justice here on earth.



At any rate, if it can be proved that the materialistic theory of consciousness is false, and that man has a more important end than the satisfaction of his bodily wants and his merely earthly happiness, we shall then have established a new fulcrum for the moralist.

There is no question but that there are many noble men and women to-day who have reached such a degree of moral development and spiritual culture, that they profess no desire or even feel no necessity for a continued existence after death. The evidence seems to them to be against any conception of personal survival. And by a kind of lofty stoicism they have accustomed themselves to the idea that death ends all. By virtue of their ideals, without any thought of a future reward or happiness, they are living here and now the truly moral life, both as individuals and as members of society. They can and do live the blameless and the serviceable life with no hope of a personal future.

But such a lofty attitude implies a degree of moral and spiritual culture and self-discipline that is as rare as it is admirable. For the great mass of men and women, however, hope is an essential element of the strong, courageous and aspiring life. It would seem as if there were very few who can act rationally without hope. It is essential to every desire we have and to every volition we exercise. There is no rationality in any act save as we can hope for its fruition as the fulfillment of our desires. If personality has any value in Nature, we must appraise it as Nature does. If consciousness perishes at death, it is clear that hope has no application beyond the grave. If personality extends beyond the grave, however, then hope has a wider sphere of meaning, and so has life. Desire and volition have no meaning except with reference to a future; and with no prospect of attainment of our aims — of all of which we feel ourselves capable — the vast majority of men would have little reverence for a

scheme of existence that allows opportunity for no genuine achievement, and only keeps us at the eternal task of Sisyphus.

From the ethical view-point it seems clear that the proof of survival, if it is eventually found, must mean great gain for the moral life of man. There is no question of the right and the duty to insist on economic justice and to strive for a moral equal distribution of this world's good things, here and now. But the value of this larger share will depend wholly upon the use to which it is put, when it has been acquired. And its use will depend upon the ideals of its possessor. Money is power and like all power it should receive respect only in proportion to its furtherance of ethical ideals. And where shall we begin to build our ideals if not in a deeper reverence for the worth of our true selves and the intrinsic value of every other personality. If the proof of survival did nothing more than to bring that reverence into human life, it would have laid the foundation of a loftier morality and a nobler society.

It is not the mere fact that we survive death that will affect directly the conduct of individuals and societies, but its place in the organic system of ideas and ideals of the social body. It was not the mere belief in immortality that gave to early Christianity its power, but the influence of that belief in giving to all of life a new and higher qualitative value. It is clear that an intelligent belief in a future life is, for most people, the best fortification for all those duties which have a relation to an existence beyond the present. If we could organize, in association with that belief, a stronger sense of human brotherhood, and rise to the realization of those moral and social ideals that flow naturally from it, it might ultimately influence our social systems and our political institutions as profoundly as did the fifteen centuries of Christian supremacy.



But there will be little gain for the world in any future discovery, bearing upon the proof of survival, unless it does develop the consciousness of a new meaning in human values, and unless we learn to perceive in its truth, the moral and social implications for human existence on this planet.

## CHAPTER X

### THE MEANING OF PSYCHIC RESEARCH FOR RELIGION

"The world is no more the alien terror that was taught me. Spurning the cloud-grimed and still sultry battlements whence so lately Jehovan thunders boomed, my gray gull lifts her wing against the nightfall, and takes the dim leagues with a fearless eye. . . . And now after twenty-seven years of this experience, the wing is grayer, but the eye is fearless still, while I renew and doubly emphasize that declaration. I *know*, as having known, the meaning of Existence; the sane center of the universe — at once the wonder and the assurance of the soul."— *Benjamin Paul Blood*.

IN its great days, organized religion has always stood out, heroically, in opposition to the spirit of its age. It has dared to antagonize the powers-that-be. To the custom-made morality of the times it has opposed an absolute morality. In the presence of prevailing ideals of expediency and opportunism, it has set up its own ideals of right and simple honesty, of uncompromising justice, of disinterested love. It has not been the servile time-server, but has sought to live its life bravely, and sometimes very sternly, as from the view-point of Eternity. At such periods in its history it has had to endure social ostracism and, oftentimes, bitterest persecution; but the degree of its "unpopularity" has usually been the measure of its genuine spiritual life and moral power.

This will ever be true for the simple reason that "pure religion and undefiled" must always stand frankly and uncompromisingly for ideal things; and the world-as-it-is, where religion must take its place, is for the most part blind to ideal things, and, in daily practice, makes little or no attempt to



translate them into life. This is only another way of saying that it is the function of religion to lead in all that makes for the higher moral and spiritual life of man; and if it does truly lead, it must of necessity stand above and apart from the present world, not in any spatial sense, but in the texture and quality of its spiritual perceptions, of its moral insight, of its devotion to ideals, of its passion for righteousness.

When its message becomes merely the echo of the *Zeitgeist*, when it ceases to be the fearless non-conformist to things-as-they-are, when it prefers to be popular rather than to be right, and has no higher objective than just "to go with the crowd," then, in spite of all its boasted wealth and the number of its adherents, its spiritual power has departed, and "Ichabod" can truly be inscribed over the portals of its temples. For this much is clear to-day, beyond peradventure, that the power and truth of any religion consist not in its creeds or its forms, its wealth or its numbers, but solely in its clear grasp upon the moral and spiritual values of life.

If the industrial revolution has destroyed our moral idealism, modern science has swept away our creeds. Apology has often been made for religious conditions to-day by saying that religion, like everything else, is passing through a transitional stage in its development. This is profoundly true, but the pathos of the situation lies in the fact that in the realm of religious thought and activity, there is apparent the same aimless drifting, the same absence of any common purpose, the same confusion and bickerings, the same blindness to human needs — in a word, the same muddle-headedness that exists in other realms of thought and activity to-day.

Traditional religion entered the dangerous region of threatening rocks and hidden reefs in the early part of the century, when the scholars began to apply the new historic sense and the scientific principles of historical inquiry to the study of the origins of Christianity and to the sources and the de-

velopment of Christian theology. Biblical criticism began with the Old Testament, but it could not stop there; resolutely it pushed on into the field of the New Testament, where not only the epistles but the still more sacred Gospel narratives, containing the record of the life and the teachings of the Founder of the Christian religion, were subjected to the most rigid scrutiny. While much that had constituted traditional belief was swept away, that which remained — the historicity of the broad outlines of the life of Jesus and of his essential teachings — was placed on a surer and more permanent foundation than it had ever occupied before, as the result of this scientific inquiry.

Now, if the theologians and the leaders of religious thought generally, had then frankly recognized these old theologies for what they really are — poetic mythologies, enshrining not as history or science or philosophy, but as poetry, great and imperishable truths that must, in the very nature of things, be translated afresh from generation to generation — and had then honestly sought to translate these poetic truths, or symbols, into a prose more intelligent to, and more consonant with, the generally accepted knowledge of modern times than was the language of the creeds, the results might have been very different for religion and for the world. There were a few who did make this honest attempt, but they were so few comparatively, and they encountered such bitter opposition both from officialism in religion and also from the deep-seated prejudices of the less intelligent masses, that their influence was strictly limited. It is to such brave and intelligent leaders, however, that true religion owes its greatest debt of gratitude, all down through the centuries.

For the most part, however, the religious leaders either set themselves rigidly to the defense of traditional views against all the encroachments of science, or else weakly sought to compromise with science, agreeing to surrender a rampart



there, if they might be allowed to keep the citadel here, not realizing that it was the very foundation of faith rather than any of its particular statements that was in jeopardy, and not daring to face resolutely and frankly the main issue.

It is here that we see the possible meaning that psychic research may have for the religion of the future.

Leaving aside in this connection all subordinate questions, what is the fundamental need in religion to-day? The answer is clear; it is the need of religion in everyday life. It is the need of the rebirth of religion in the actual experience of living men and women. Religion must again become experiential, as in its greatest days, and cease to be what it has so largely become — chiefly a matter of traditions. Men must find again a first-hand experience of the truths of religion, instead of accepting them second-hand from some far away past. We need not cease to believe in holy men and prophets of other days, but we must produce our own holy men and prophets, and find in their messages as authoritative a revelation for to-day as ever found expression through prophets of a by-gone age.

Man must find the seat of authority, in religion, not in any creed or church however hoary with age, but within himself — in the truth that he feels and perceives and knows as such. He must no longer be content simply to "accept as true" the teachings of Jesus or of any of the other great leaders of the race, for they will never be true for him until they have been tested in experience and become a very part of the inmost fiber of his being. He must not cherish the ideals of religion merely as beautiful sentiments, though quite impractical for this world, but he must dare to make them his very own, in the sense of incorporating them into life and character so that they shall become the dynamic, all-compelling source, from whence shall proceed all his thoughts, his words and his deeds,

Religion must become again what it was in the beginning, and what it has always been in its great creative moments — a religion of man, that is, a religion born in man's inner consciousness, tested in his own experience, rising spontaneously from his own first-hand contact with reality and translating itself into life and spirit and character. In other words, religion must be known and felt and loved, as a living experience within — not merely believed as a creed or accepted as an ideal — if it is to find its true rebirth in the new age. Only thus will men and women have the faith and the courage to *live out* their religion in all the relations of life; only thus will the church, made up of such men and women, regain its lost moral and spiritual leadership in the world; only thus will the present uncertainty in belief give way to a new and living faith; and only thus can a new theology arise, that translates its truths into terms harmonious with the accepted truths of modern science and philosophy.

But what relation can psychic research have to this fundamental need of religion, to become again a living experience in human life? Already psychic research has succeeded in taking the whole subject of immortality, which has constituted hitherto one of the central doctrines of all religions, out of the domain of theology, and has made of it a purely human problem. Fewer people will still go to the creeds hereafter for their ideas on immortality. No longer, as in the past, can the church make men believe that it, and it alone, holds the keys of heaven and hell in its hands. If men are to survive death, it will not be because they are church members, but human beings. This much psychic research has accomplished — it has made of immortality a human, as well as a religious problem.

But still further, in its scientific search for the facts, psychic research is seeking to take the truth of human survival which has been based only on statements found in the sacred



scriptures of the past, and on faith in the integrity of the human instincts, and base it upon experience, an experience that can be verified and thus proven to be true. Now, if psychic research should succeed in its great quest, can we estimate what the result would be for religion, entirely apart from its direct bearing on human life? It would mean that one of the great central doctrines of religion had been taken out of the domain of faith or hope or conjecture, and transferred to the realm of living experience — for that is just what the scientific proof of survival would involve.

Such proof would carry with it, not as theory but as actual experience, the vastly deepened sense of the worth of human personality that Nature values too highly to allow to perish with the body. With this would inevitably come, also in experience, the keener appreciation of all those things that belong essentially to the mental and moral life — the only part of us that can possibly survive physical death. It would also seem to follow as a matter of course, for all who knew the experience, that the moral and spiritual values of life would take precedence over the values merely of time and sense. Duty would become more attractive than pleasure; selfish happiness would give place to mutual enjoyment, and the giving of one's best for the sake of others would be far more satisfying than getting for one's self. Thus would religion tend to become both ethicized and socialized.

It might even come about that man would discover afresh, within himself, his oneness with the Great Reality, so that the God who is to-day to so many merely a dogma, a formula, a name to conjure by, would become known, in experience, as "the life of my life, the soul of my soul, the self of my self." A new mysticism might even be born that would recreate the soul of religion, of art in all its many forms, aye, of life itself — a mysticism based on experience. For some sort of mysticism lies always at the heart of the

creative impulse; and when religion springs out of a living experience, it is always creative, bringing into being the life that is life indeed.

Religion has passed through its historical stage of inquiry; it has had its theological and its biological phases; in all of these it has both gained and lost. At last, it is coming to its own in its psychological stage of inquiry. For nothing is clearer than that the religion of the future will be based, in the last analysis, on a truer and more adequate psychology of man. Psychic research is really dealing with certain fundamental phases of the coming psychology of religion. When all questions of religion are clearly shown to be primarily human questions, and not theological, born of human needs and answering in their solution to human aspirations, when they are eventually taken out of the control of ecclesiastical institutions and become the common knowledge of all men, then, and not until then, will true religion be established in the earth.

Psychic Research, while it has naturally limited its investigations to certain phases of man's inner life, has nevertheless tremendously stimulated the psychological study of religion on the part of others. James's significant book, "The Varieties of Religious Experience," prepared the way for men like Starbuck and Coe, Ames and Leuba, Pratt and especially G. Stanley Hall, whose writings constitute most illuminating and suggestive contributions to the psychology of religion, and the end is not yet; in fact, we are only at the beginning of the work in this field of inquiry.

Another interesting phase of the work of psychic research in its bearing on religion, is found in the rapid development of psychotherapy. If the researchers succeed in proving that man, in his essence, is indeed an imperishable soul, and that his mind is something more than just a series of mental states, it will go far to strengthen the feeling fast gaining ground to-



day, that in mind a new force has been added to healing. Without setting aside the achievements of the *materia medica*, the physician will then have to become a psychologist as well; he will also have to be a sincere moralist. He must recognize that mind is the primary factor in healing, and that in order to heal successfully the bodies of men, he must heal their souls. Thus the function of religion may again be widened by science, so as to include as in early times, the salvation of bodies as well as of souls, or better still, the salvation of the body through the soul.

These are simply a few of the possibilities that might be opened up to the revitalizing of religion, through the further efforts of the psychic researchers. It may indeed be true that they are working better than any of them know, and toward far-reaching ends they do not now descry. Of one thing we can be sure: if psychic research, either directly or indirectly, helps to hasten the day when religion shall be re-born in a fresh and actual experience of living men and women, it will have laid the whole world under lasting obligation.

Religion, born of a living experience and translated into terms of experience — this is indeed the Great Revival for which the world impatiently waits. We see those old-time revivals to-day for what they really were — the convulsive movements of a body that suffocates. They have always been the clearest manifestations of a sense in all men that things were not right with the world, and that in some way religion was to blame. But they were all too-often but momentary illuminations. Their force spent itself in incoördinated shoutings, gesticulations, tears. They were but flashes of outlook, inadequate, imperfect. They sought to save souls, not knowing that no soul is ever saved alone, that salvation must be social as well as individual, and that no souls ever can be truly saved until society is redeemed. Disgust of the nar-

row life, of all baseness, often took shape in narrowness and baseness. The quickened soul often awoke the next morning a hypocrite. And it was almost universal that the converted should be impatient and intolerant, scornful of reason and a choice of expedients, opposed to balance, commonsense and knowledge.

So the former revivals spent themselves. But the Great Revival, when it shall finally come, born of the living experience of man with reality, with truth and with the eternal values of life, will not thus spend itself, but will grow to be the permanent expression in human life and in all social relationships of the Kingdom of God here upon earth.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE REAL IMMORTALITY

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist;  
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power  
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,  
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,  
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,  
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;

Enough that He heard it once; we shall hear it by and by."

—*Browning's "Abt. Vogler."*

BEFORE leaving the subject, the author desires in these closing chapters briefly to direct the mind of the reader toward a conception of immortality with which it is not the province of psychic research to deal, but which is necessary to the completion of our thought and the satisfying of our ethical instincts. It may be regarded as a more philosophical conception than any suggestions made by the researcher, within the limits of his own particular field.

The scientist, as such, is seeking facts, and the verification of those facts; while the philosopher's primary aim is to find the truth, based upon his interpretation of the facts of the scientist, and also to bring that truth into harmonious relations with the whole general body of truth. The psychic researcher professes to be working as a scientist with the sole aim of ascertaining the facts in regard to human survival, in accordance with strictly scientific methods. When he has finally and conclusively proved for us the nature of the facts

with which he deals — whether they are psychic or spiritual in origin — then we must turn to philosophy for the larger interpretation of these facts and for their comprehensive relation to truth as a whole.

While in popular consideration we speak of survival and immortality as if they were synonymous — and we have done so in the preceding chapters — still, strictly speaking, psychic research has nothing whatever directly to do with immortality; its field is much more circumscribed. It is seeking the scientific evidence for the survival of human consciousness after death, and survival is in no sense synonymous with immortality. A moment's reflection will serve to make this clear, although most researchers fail to point out this distinction. My personality may survive the death of my physical body, but it by no means follows, if that fact be proved, that my personality, whether or no, must continue on in an endless existence. In the nature of things, psychic research never has, nor never can, attempt to prove endless existence, which is of the essence of immortality, for the human personality by scientific methods, although it is freely granted that it may be possible for it to thus prove human survival. But whether that survival is itself a limited thing, or whether it is indeed to continue on forever, is beyond the range of science, so far as we can see, to either prove or disprove.

It is here that we must turn to philosophy, if we are to find satisfaction in our quest for the truth. For philosophy lifts us at once to a realm that transcends the limits of temporal and spatial relations, and any conception of immortality necessarily belongs to such a transcendent realm. Survival after death, as the researcher seeks his evidence, is still within the limitations of time and space; "spirits" come and go, they are here or there, they "communicate" with us to-night and promise to return again next week at the same place and hour. According to many of the so-called "communica-



tions," the departed have bodies very similar to ours, they wear garments, live in houses, eat and drink. All this, if it be true, would certainly indicate a material existence, even though the "matter" be of a more tenuous quality than that which we know here. This may prove to constitute the actual conditions under which those who survive live their lives in "another world," and it would surely amount to continued existence on another plane, along the same essential lines that characterize existence here on earth. But it is difficult to see, at least with our preconceptions, how this would necessarily constitute a more spiritual existence, nor how it would in any sense involve immortality for the survivor.

It may turn out that all our preconceptions as to a spiritual existence have been wrong; and we may be obliged, as time goes on, to revolutionize all our ideas on this subject. Or, if such communications prove to contain the truth, we may discover that such a higher — albeit a "material" existence still — is only a transitional stage through which the survivor passes on in time to a more truly spiritual life, a bridge as it were, between the strictly material existence here on earth and one more spiritual. Or perhaps, as the theosophists contend, there is a series of stages or spheres through which one passes during long æons of time, gradually leaving behind or out-growing the materiality of the past, until at last, far off, he reaches the plane of "pure spirit." But all this is speculation, though it is not at all unreasonable if man is really to survive death. Since we have never seen spirit apart from matter, what can we predicate of "immaterial spirits"? We have no means of knowing, or even the terms by which to express, what "pure spirit" would be and what would constitute the conditions of its life. On such ultimate questions, it is hard for us to see how science could ever be able to throw any direct light. Even if human survival be proved, it would seem that the ultimate mystery of man's eternal destiny would

still remain; only the veil of our ignorance would then have been pushed back a little further.

The antagonism that so many thoughtful minds have felt toward psychic research arises from the fact that so much of the purported evidence seems to tend toward the materializing of the spiritual rather than the spiritualizing of the material, though this is by no means true of all the "communications" received. Much of the information obtained through mediums and, especially, all physical phenomena impress them as being vulgarly materialistic and as having nothing spiritual about them. It is easy to sympathize with this feeling, and it would be true of such evidence if taken by itself alone, apart from evidence of a much more spiritual character. It is also doubtless true that for a large number of amateur "experimenters," the material side of the phenomena far outweighs its spiritual implications and values. This is only another reason why the work of investigation, at the present stage of inquiry, should be left to the trained experts.

It needs to be affirmed that in suggesting a more philosophical and truly spiritual conception of the real immortality, the author in no sense intends to disparage, even in the slightest degree, the work of the trained researcher, the value of the evidence he has already secured, or the profound significance of the fact of human survival, if it should one day be proved. The preceding chapters must make that clear. But he does contend that the mere fact of survival would not necessarily prove the soul's immortality, and the conception of man's real immortality, as herein presented, would in nowise be affected, whatever the final conclusions as to survival may prove to be.

A little reflection will serve to convince any one that *merely to survive*, just as we are now, with all our present conscious imperfections and weaknesses, would never satisfy the growing and aspiring soul of man. The real reason for our present dissatisfactions and discouragements and unhappinesses,



and the large place that hope plays in most lives, spring from the fact that, constituted as he is, man can never long be content with himself as he is, any more than he can be with things-as-they-are. A "something" in him impels him forward irresistibly; he feels he must advance, must make progress toward some distant goal, however vague. This deep characteristic of life here, for all of us, and that conditions all human growth and progress on earth, can hardly be lost if personality is to survive, for it is of the very essence of personality, and it is inconceivable that in another life it should cease to function.

It would never satisfy us to feel that the constantly changing kaleidoscopic self we all know here, the self of varying moods and wayward tendencies and unworthy impulses, against whose weaknesses and foibles and faults we are always struggling in the earth life, was to continue just the same sort of struggling existence after death, sometimes attaining but more often failing. This is the self we are all the time seeking to master and control — the surface self of life that we strive continually to subordinate to the deeper, truer self that we feel instinctively lies within at life's center. Who would want to feel that he was carrying that ever restless and impermanent self, just as it is, into another existence? On the other hand, is there any one who, in moments of deep reflection, does not feel intuitively that the only part of us that is indeed worthy of immortality, or for which we crave immortality, is that part that belongs to, or is associated with, this deeper spiritual self within?

If Maeterlinck's and James's conception be true, and we are surrounded by a Universal Consciousness, of which we are all but individualized parts, it is inconceivable to think that this tiny bit of consciousness we know here should indeed remain unmodified or unchanged, as it leaves the body behind and comes into more direct and vital relations with the larger

Consciousness of the universe. It must expand, deepen and widen more or less rapidly, the true and spiritual self within us ever becoming more and more our real and conscious self; until it may even transpire that the tiny consciousness we knew on earth as the self, is swallowed up as it were, or well-nigh forgotten, in the immensely larger spiritual self-consciousness that takes its place.

So that the time may come when the survival of the self, as we know it here, will become a matter of complete indifference to us, when we may even come to feel that the whole question of survival upon which we now lay such stress is in reality only a symbol, adapted to undeveloped minds and unawakened spirits, of that real immortality for which we are truly destined. The main thing that actually interests us in survival, when we think carefully about it, is that only that part of us, and of others, that is really worthwhile and valuable shall persist beyond death.

We are all familiar with the axioms of science as to the indestructibility of matter and the conservation of energy. Outward forms change and disappear, but the essence of both matter and energy is eternal, according to physical science. Professor Höffding, the well-known Danish philosopher, in his book entitled, "The Philosophy of Religion," formulates another axiom that he calls, "The Conservation of Values." In his view as philosopher, he agrees with Browning and other seers, that no real value or good is ever actually lost. The whole progress and course of evolution is to increase and intensify the Valuable — that which "avails," or is serviceable for highest purposes — and it does so by bringing out that which was potential or latent, so as to make it actual and real. Real it was, no doubt, all the time in some sense, as an oak is implicit in the acorn or a flower in a bud; but in the process of time, it unfolds, and thus adds to the realized Value of the universe.



With this view of Nature's emphasis upon the Valuable, true immortality for anything may be defined as the persistence of the essential and the real; it applies to things or qualities which the Universe has gained — things or qualities which, once acquired, cannot be let go. Immortality for anything or any being, therefore, is the result of Nature's law of the Conservation of Value. The tendency of evolution is to increase the actuality of Value, converting it from a potential into an available form.

But what constitutes "real values," of which we can thus positively affirm immortality? The New Realism, as it is called, that represents a very marked tendency in philosophical thought to-day, reaches the climax of its reasoning in its Doctrine of Values, which means nothing less than the objective actuality of the great moral ideals. These indeed are the eternal realities. We ask the question: What is the status of that perfect justice which none would be so daring as to claim is realized in any human society, or in the life of any one human being, or, indeed, in any single human act, but which nevertheless is thought about and is considered by at least some philosophers to be implied by imperfectly just acts? In answer to this question one may inquire, e. g. if the perfect, the geometrical circle, ceases to be an entity because no physical object ever attains its perfection? Indeed does not the very imperfections of such physical objects imply the perfect, as the limit of the approximations? And would the perfect circle cease to be if all physical objects were annihilated? Then does *ideal justice*, as a standard for men to attain to if possible, become less of a fact because society, and poor, frail human beings and their concrete acts fall short of this ideal? Would it cease to be, should a cataclysm hurtle all human beings forever into non-existence? And was it a non-fact in those far reaches of past time when to living nature the glow of dawning humanity had not yet come?

Professor Spaulding answers these questions, for the new realists, in the following words: "The answer to these inquiries is almost as old as man's own philosophizing, and is one that unites modern Realism with ancient Idealism. It is that *ideals are real*. Plato was, and still remains, the great spokesman. *Eternal* are justice and goodness and truth and love, not because they persist through all time, but because 'in a heaven by themselves' they partake neither of the nature of 'things' that are in time and space, nor indeed, of the nature of time and space themselves. Time- and space-conditioned things — 'existents,' we call them — approximate to the ideal in various degrees, but never attain it. This was the philosophy of Plato — his Idealism and his Realism — and also is it modern Realism, with *its reality of ideals and its ideal reals*. Justice, truth, goodness and beauty are 'eternal verities' — entities, not subject to the stresses and strains that distort the particular and concrete time- and perhaps also, space-conditioned products of natural processes."

To summarize: the new realism holds that values have a real existence, that they are real parts of the objective world, external to and independent of not only their being perceived, conceived and appreciated, but also of the physiological organism. Man does not create the great moral and spiritual values of life, as might commonly be supposed; all he does is to discover their actuality, in experience with the help of reason. It is these supreme values that are the eternal and immortal realities. There is, then, a realm of values that is not subject to the stresses and strains of this starry universe and this slowly evolving earth. This, let us remember, is not only the view of the new realism; it is at least as old as Plato. The Valuable, in the highest sense, are the supreme moral and spiritual ideals; and if they have a real existence, an objective actuality as is claimed, then man is indeed living in



a spiritual universe in which matter and force are not the last or final words.

If man, then, seeks the assurance of a genuinely spiritual immortality, and not merely a more or less material survival after death, it follows as a matter of course that he must lay hold of these "eternal verities," which are in their very essence of eternity, and of whose immortality there cannot possibly be any dispute. To these he must give heed, daily and hourly, not as to beautiful or poetic sentiments to whose appeal he may occasionally or spasmodically respond, but as to inexorable principles of life that he must habitually translate into character. Even as he obeys the physical laws of gravitation, of nutrition, of exercise and of rest, in the preservation and care of his body, just so faithfully will he obey those spiritual laws that make for the preservation and development of his immortal spirit. To one who has actually awakened to the meaning of the moral and spiritual values of life, there are no other values comparable. The pleasures of the flesh, the joys of the senses, the lure of ambition in the attainment of the good things of this world — all these will have, and should have, their perfectly legitimate place, but they will never be allowed to stand in the way of the most complete allegiance to the great ideals. In the little things of life as well as in the larger, in social relations just as truly as in individual, daily and hourly, at home and abroad, with friends and with strangers, everywhere and constantly, he will seek to live his life by the light and in the inspiration of the eternal verities. He will seek first, Justice and Truth, Goodness and Beauty, Sincerity and Love, even as men seek after great riches, for he knows that these constitute the priceless *summum bonum* of life. In the depths of his being he will hear the voice that says: "Be good, be true, be just, be loving, for goodness and truth and justice and love belong not to time but to eternity,

and you have the capacity within yourself to partake of these eternal qualities and make them an essential part of your very self forever."

Thus as he gradually comes to live his life more and more habitually in the presence of these high values, as voluntary struggle and stress and strain to realize more perfectly these ideals, slowly gives place to involuntary and unconscious co-operation with them, until at length he comes literally to live and move and have his being in these eternal verities, then indeed, and not till then, does he enter, by right and inevitably, into the real immortality, for in his deepest self he has thus become an actual part of these realities that have always been of the very essence of immortality, simply because they are not of time but of eternity.

This is the true and spiritual immortality we crave above all other possible conceptions. Simply to live on, as we have been here, under conditions more or less similar to those of earthly life, would satisfy but comparatively few, and it would not satisfy these for long. To survive death without any real sense of moral values and with no hope of ever coming into harmony with the eternal ideals would be less acceptable than annihilation. Deeper than all desire for mere continued existence, or even for reunion with loved ones, is the desire to come at length into harmony with the highest and best the Universe affords, and thus to become part and parcel of the eternal values of life.

It must be admitted that not many seem to have grasped as yet the meaning of a really spiritual immortality. Just as most persons' ideas of God are still anthropomorphic rather than spiritual, even so their ideas of a future life are construed in terms materialistic rather than spiritual, after the fashion of life in this world. This is natural and perhaps even necessary, provided the language we use is always understood to be figurative or symbolic; but it also goes to show how



many there are who have never yet learned to think in spiritual terms, or to visualize to themselves spiritual conceptions of truth. It is greatly to be feared that the ideas of heaven entertained by most professing Christians bear more resemblance to the Moslem's heaven of physical delights or the Indian's Happy Hunting Ground than they do to a truly spiritual existence. The vague hope of reunion with loved ones, in a life of tranquil ease and pleasure, with no more worries and plenty of time to rest, in a perfectly congenial atmosphere — how far beyond this do most people go in their thoughts of a future life? And yet, if asked the direct question, even these people would scarcely admit that their conception was either very lofty or very spiritual.

The difference between this philosophical conception of the real immortality and the fundamental religious idea, as voiced by the great spiritual leaders of the race, is not so great as might at first appear. Nearly all the great spiritual seers have pictured immortality as affording the opportunity to the advancing soul for ultimate union with God, in some form. This union with the Divine was to them the great culmination of life; and when this state had been attained, true immortality would at last be achieved. Sometimes this ultimate union was interpreted to mean the absorption of the individual in the life of the ALL-BEING; sometimes it was taught that the individual retained his identity but came eventually into vital union with the ALL-LIFE.

According to the new realism, "God is the totality of Values, both existent and subsistent, and of those agencies and efficiencies with which these values are identical. He is also at once the multiplicities of these entities and the unity of their organization." This means that God is not only good and just and loving, but that God is Justice and Goodness and Truth and Love, both as these are "above" our world and as they are *in* it, and that He is thus both transcendent and im-

manent. Thus if God is personality, He is also more than personality, even as the moral situation among men is more than personality. He is love and affection and goodness, respect and reverence, as these exist among and in men, but He is these also as they subsist by themselves, and act efficiently upon men. In brief, God is Value, the active, living principle of the conservation of values and of their efficiency.

Now if real immortality, in the spiritual sense, involves the coming into truest, fullest harmony with the great moral and spiritual values, or the eternal ideals — Justice and Truth, Goodness and Love — this is only the philosophical way of saying that real immortality means the coming into closest and truest union with God, since God is Justice and Truth, Goodness and Love — the sum total of all moral and spiritual values. And to thus come into union with God is the realization of true immortality as taught by all the great religious leaders of the world.

It is very possible that this view of immortality will, at first thought, leave the reader cold and unsatisfied. To one who is accustomed to think of immortality as synonymous with continued existence "just as it is," or with reunion with loved ones "just as they were," it may even seem to lack all the essentials of true immortality. But at least it possesses this advantage: it would still be a true and spiritual view of immortality even if psychic research failed to discover the scientific proof of survival. And it would be true, and even more necessary to complete and spiritualize our present ideas of survival, if the researchers should succeed in their demonstration of continued existence.

Whether psychic research succeeds or fails in finding "proof," this much is clear, on the basis of the Conservation of Values: If there is anything of real value in continued personal existence after death, anything that would increase or add to the moral and spiritual values of the universe, then



we may safely assume that personality, or personal identity, will persist beyond the grave; if not, it will fall away and be forgotten. In the same way, we may be very sure that anything of real value in our love for dear ones and in the spiritual ties that bind us to them, can never be lost in a universe that so carefully conserves all true values. Whether we shall find them again "just as they were," or in some larger sense, that we are now unable to conceive, makes little difference, since whatever of real worth existed, in our relations with them, must be preserved as a part of that which is valuable, and therefore, imperishable in this universe.

The real question, then, is not, "If a man die, shall he live again?" but rather, "If a man die, does he deserve to live again?" The supreme personal question is not, "Am I immortal?" but "Am I worthy of true immortality?" Have I achieved in myself that which is of sufficient value to the universe to justify immortality for me? Am I sufficiently "real," in the sense that my life in its inner consciousness has blended and become one with the God who is Justice and Truth, Goodness and Love? Is my personality sufficiently developed in the True, the Beautiful, the Good, so that it does not fear the death of the body, whenever that may take place? Am I so at one with the "eternal verities" that death can have no power over me?

In Ibsen's drama, "Peer Gynt," the theme is the same we have been considering: What is it to be one's self? What is it to find one's self? What is it that gives real worth and value to one's personality? As, step by step, we follow this capricious creature through all his kaleidoscopic career, we see him in all his deep-seated selfishness, his cynical indifference to higher things, his superstitious and often revolting religion, his insincerity, his compromise, his treachery, his deceitfulness, his lust. More than once he catches a vision of something higher and better, nobler and purer; but his bet-

ter self turns away from the vision and submits itself again to degradation as he continues his downward course. Near the close of the drama he meets the button-molder with his large casting ladle. He insists that he must have the soul of Peer Gynt to melt in his ladle, in order to make of the raw material new and better souls. Peer Gynt resists this destruction of himself with all his might. He tries to show the button molder that he has always been his true self. But, little by little, the button molder shows him that not only God's Peer Gynt but even the devil's Peer Gynt as well, has been washed out of existence. There has ceased to be anything decisive or individual even in his sins, and so he must go into the melting pot. At last he begins to see that he is indeed no one, and this very recognition is the first step on a better way. But he begs for a little respite, just a short time in which to discover somewhere, if possible, his lost self. The button-molder finally consents, adding, "Nevertheless, we'll meet at the next cross-roads, Peer Gynt." As he proceeds on his search, Peer Gynt at last meets Solvejg, the one woman who has truly loved the real self in him all these years, and who has been waiting in confidence for his ultimate return. And he cries out to her: "Can you tell me where Peer Gynt has been since we parted? Where has he been with the mark of his destiny on his brow? Been as he sprang from God's thought? Where have I been as my self? Whole and true? Where have I been with God's stamp on my brow?" And Solvejg replies softly, and smiling, "In my faith, in my hope and in my love."

In the light of modern philosophy and science, entirely apart now from the significance of psychic research, and also in the more reasonable faith of religion to-day, our chief concern should not be whether we are to carry merely self-consciousness through the shadows of death, but rather, what degree of self-consciousness will we take with us when we leave



these familiar scenes? Shall it be the clear consciousness of the full-fledged and symmetrical personality who knows himself to be one with the eternal verities of the universe, or shall it be the faint consciousness of one who has only begun to take the first faltering steps in the direction of true manhood and womanhood? The greatest thing in the universe, next to God, is human life, and the greatest thing in human life is the fully developed personality, and the developed personality is one in whom the moral and spiritual values of life have attained the supremacy — in whom the divine and the human are blended in conscious unity.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF IMMORTALITY

"It is my faith that God is our own dream  
Of perfect understanding of the soul.  
It is my passion that, alike through me  
And every member of Eternity,  
The source of God is sending the same stream.  
It is my peace that when my life is whole,  
God's life shall be completed and supreme."

— *Witter Bynner.*

SCIENCE reveals clearly the climatic changes that have taken place on our planet. We read that bleak and dreary Labrador was once a tropical realm, a wilderness of fruits and flowers, while the region of the Amazon, now luxuriantly fertile, was once the home of the iceberg. But there came the time when some disturbance gave our earth a new inclination toward the sun, and the land that had never known frost became covered with ice and snow, while the Amazon passed into the warmth of perpetual summer. This striking change that has taken place in the physical world may well illustrate the marked change of attitude that has taken place in man's relation to the experience of death, so that now summer reigns where once winter ruled.

The older philosophy that pictured death as a "Monster with hideous mien," is either wholly dead or else dying. The philosophies of idealism all enunciate confidently some kind of immortality for man, and the still later philosophy of new realism implies at least a real immortality, in just so far as man brings his life into harmony with the "eternal verities"



of the universe. The science that was once so generally materialistic and sought to clip the wings of faith is now, through many of its foremost representatives, learning itself to soar into supra-sensible realms. Nothing can be more significant than the fact that to-day it is science and philosophy, not religion, that are leading the way in the study and investigation of the meaning of death and immortality.

Immanuel Kant, that master mind of the eighteenth century, once said: "At some future day it will be proved — I cannot say when or where — that the human soul is, while in earth life, already in an uninterrupted communication with those living in another world; that the human soul can act upon those beings, and receive in return impressions of them without being conscious of it in the ordinary personality." As we contemplate the work that is being done by modern psychic research, it would almost seem as if Kant's prediction were on the point of being fulfilled in our own day. If it seems that the multitudes of those now living on the earth were still standing in the valley of shadows, straining their eyes to see and their ears to hear, it is well to remember that to-day, as never before in human history, it is the valley of expectancy and hope. While to many of us there may be as yet only silence and uncertainty, still the very silence is portentous; it is a whispering, breathing silence; there is a catching of the breath, a faint tremulous movement that may but precede the clear, full song of assurance.

But in spite of the fact that all religions have taught some form of belief in immortality, that Christianity has made the resurrection from the dead one of the cardinal articles of its creeds, and that it can be said that in a nominal sense most men *believe* in immortality, still the fear of death lingers in countless minds, and the dark clouds of sorrow hang heavy over multitudes of lives — never so heavy or so extensive as to-day — and when the hour of bereavement comes, our pro-

fessed beliefs seldom stand the test, and we are left in confusion of mind and darkness of soul. Though religion has thus taught, and philosophy has made reasonable, and psychic research is actually claiming to have discovered the evidence for the soul's immortality, still there are many who either secretly doubt or else frankly disavow all belief in immortality. In every audience of men and women, whatever arguments may be used or whatever evidence may be adduced, a certain percentage will go out believing, but it is safe to assume that the majority will go out practically to doubt the soul's continuance after death. Experience teaches conclusively that you can never convince another of the truth of immortality, any more than you can of the existence of God, by mere intellectual arguments or by any amount of external evidence. The reality, whether of God or of immortality, must be perceived *within*, that is to say, it must be *personally experienced*, if it is to hold a vital place in one's life and thought. The reason that the so-called universal belief in immortality has not yet conquered the fear of death, or banished sorrow in its deepest aspects from the world, is because, like so many other beliefs, it is merely nominal and has not incorporated itself among the actual verities of man's inner consciousness. Perhaps the belief will never thus become vital until the fact of survival is proven to be true; but it is safe to say that even if the world possessed the scientific proof of survival, the great mass of people might yet be very far from *realizing* either the truth or the meaning of immortality in their daily lives.

The great word in religion to-day is no longer belief, but *realization*. This is always true, as religion passes from the merely intellectual stage to the spiritual stage, and thus becomes experiential. A belief may be merely the intellectual acceptance of a certain statement or definition of some truth, whereas to *realize* that truth means to perceive the truth as a



reality in one's own inner consciousness. It is one thing to believe in God; it is quite a different thing to *realize* God, as the self of our selves, the soul of our souls, the life of our lives. It is one thing to believe in the ideals and principles of Jesus; it is a vastly different thing to *realize* those ideals in one's inner personal life first of all, and then translate those principles daily into thought and word and deed. So it is one thing to believe in the soul's immortality, while it is a very different thing to *realize* the truth of immortality in such a way as to live every day in the clear, glad consciousness that we are immortal beings here and now, and that death can never touch the *real self* at all.

Far too long has religion lain imbedded in Bibles and embalmed in creeds. The most hopeful sign for religion to-day is the determination on the part of a steadily increasing number of people everywhere, to take the real truth of religion out of Bible and creed, out of sermon and belief, and persistently seek to realize its meaning and power in the actual experiences of daily life. The only vital religion after all is the realized religion, and the only belief that is worthy the name is the belief that, through actual inner experience, has become incorporated in one's deepest personal consciousness. It is the actual experience within of the truth of one's own being that alone can translate the mere belief in immortality into its actual realization. For centuries the church has taught that men ought to believe in immortality because of the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. As a matter of fact, this is to reverse the process. If we believe in the rising of the spiritual Jesus out of his body, in any real sense, it is because first of all, we believe in immortality, that is, that we ourselves are, in our essential beings, immortal.

Professor Elmer T. Gates, of the Smithsonian Institution, has gone as far in his study of the human consciousness as any of the newer psychologists. He has not yet seen fit to pub-

lish the results of all his most interesting investigations, but the scholars who have been permitted to read his manuscripts, all agree that he is one of the most original and remarkable men of this age. Professor McGee says: "His work will revolutionize education and lead to greater intellectual progress in the next quarter of a century than has been achieved in all the centuries before." This is not the place to give the processes by which Professor Gates has arrived at his startling conclusions; we desire but briefly to summarize his thought as it applies especially to the actual realization of immortality in consciousness here upon this earth.

He finds life, mind and consciousness immanent in the universe. Life, mind and consciousness, as they find expression in the human individual, could not have arisen in man, were they not inherent properties of the Eternal Energy whence all things proceed, or God. The Cosmic Consciousness, he argues, must have a nature more fundamental than our own limited individual experience, and it is from this Cosmic Consciousness that there wells up into our individual consciousness the feeling-insights, or intuitions. Thus man's intuition, or instinct for immortality, proceeds from the Cosmic Consciousness, which must know the truth. Professor Gates asks the further question: "Can consciousness directly know any truth about existence which the mind has not inductively experienced beforehand?" He answers in the affirmative. "I have never, for example, found by experience that there is not a boundary to space, but my consciousness tells me that there can be no such boundary. I have had no personal proof that duration in time was without beginning, and yet my consciousness tells me that duration must be without beginning or end. I cannot prove it, yet my consciousness tells me that the same truths that are now true, did not at any remote time first begin to be true; truth is eternal. And in somewhat the same way, my consciousness seems to know that it will survive



the death of my body; and I give it the same credence as I give to its cognitions about space, duration, motion and truth." And then he adds these significant words: "I cannot evade the conviction, based on my own experience, that all persons may, by proper training, get that kind of *skill in consciousing* which will enable them to find in their own consciousness the same evidence for immortality which I have found, and those who do so find it will indeed have a priceless possession."

But note: "By proper training all persons can get that *skill in consciousing* . . ." He is not referring here to any scientific evidence obtained through psychic research, but to an inner realization in consciousness of the truth of immortality. Is this not the reason why so few have entered into the realization of their own immortality here and now? The simple consciousness of the child should lead on naturally to the self-consciousness of the adolescent. This, in turn, should develop into the clear and intelligent consciousness of the self — the "I am," that stands behind all thinking, feeling and willing, and can control and direct them all as it chooses. But this is not the end of the unfolding of consciousness. All the great spiritual teachers of the race have taught that really to know the true self, as the divine principle within one's very being, would be to realize here and now the truth of immortality. And to-day one of our foremost psychologists tells us the same thing, when he suggests the further development of self-consciousness into cosmic consciousness, where the realization of God and of immortality becomes possible for every individual who "by training" learns the supremest secret of life — how to extend the boundaries of the inner consciousness by "skill in consciousing." This is what Bergson means when he says that "through intuition it is possible to discover the meaning of life, the very nature of existence."

Professor Gates tells us that he "finds no chasm to be

bridged between the self and the not-self; the individual self is part of the Total Self; you trace your pedigree back to the beginningless Totality — the All; you have the Universehood in you; whatever God is, *that thou art also.*”

It is not a preacher of religion, but a psychologist who makes this tremendous statement, “Whatever God is, that thou art also.” Do we realize the deep significance of these words? For centuries religion has said to man, you must believe, and then has anathematized all men who did not or could not accept the beliefs set forth by the churches. Has not the time now come when the message of religion to men shall no longer be, “Believe, on the authority of some institution or some book,” but rather, “You may *know*, it is possible for you to *realize* in your own inner consciousness the truth of God, of the soul, of freedom and of immortality”? If the representatives of religion, possessed themselves of the knowledge, should be able to instruct men and women in the true method of self-realization, in the actual experience of the truth, would not the religion of the twentieth century yet come to fulfill, as it never has done in the past, its true function in the life of humanity? It is for such a realization of the truth that the world expectantly waits to-day.

In every age and clime there have always been the great individual souls who have found this inner path to truth and life, for whom all fears of death have vanished, since they have discovered the secret of existence in the clear consciousness of the eternity of life and the permanence of all that is indeed of real value and worth. With the new light dawning to-day, there is an ever increasing number of men and women who, through their skill in consciousing, have attained to such a realization of their true selves, as being indeed one with God, that they have reached the plane of spiritual or cosmic consciousness and are living their lives continually in God, free from the bondage to fears of every kind.



To quote one more prophetic utterance from Professor Gates: "Amongst the devotees of every religion, and the peoples of every race, nation and country we find the best minds looking to science for the solution of their problems, and we have thus before us a world-movement and the basis for a world-federation. To get more mind and learn how to use it in discovering and applying truth is the basis of an active Universal Brotherhood. This great world-movement, as yet unorganized, is in the air; it is the true *Zeit-Geist* of the time; and it inaugurates a millennial cycle for humanity. This movement cannot be led by any one person or body of people, as most religious movements have been; it accepts for its creed and character and leader nothing less than the total ever-growing body of inductive scientific knowledge — the Revelation of Science; and its method will be the art of using the mind as that art may hereafter be developed. This will put the control of the world into the hands, or rather into the brains, of the best minds of each class and community. And when once a more highly developed science and art shall have been applied to the scientific begetting and rearing of children, and to their early education; and when a race of more normal people shall, by means of a perfected mentative art and with an extended scientific knowledge, have been applied to a systematic ascertainment and application of truth, carried on as a religious mission, then we may expect that a rapidly increasing knowledge of the Universe — a synthetic science — will lead to the solution of the various problems that now perplex us — and among them, the problems of God, Freedom and Immortality. We may anticipate the gradual obliteration of war, disease and crime. Following this recent extraordinary intellectual development will be a period of corresponding emotive development, in which Humanity will learn to appreciate the utilities, beauties and opportunities of existence.

“Why all this about the progress of science and the extraordinary world-movement that is revolutionizing humanity? Because I wish to emphasize one important point, namely, that there is that in the Universe which has succeeded, and is succeeding and will continue to succeed; it has produced worlds and peopled them with evolving life; it has revealed to us a body of actual knowledge; in the very fact that evolution has taken place, it shows the triumph of good over evil, the victory of knowledge over ignorance — of pleasure over pain. And that which has succeeded is Mind, or consciousness; and Mind is part of the universe, is immanent in it, has the eternal nature expressed in it; and you and I have inherited that nature, and are possessed by the spirit, meaning and promise of that greatest mystery of existence — consciousness. And by means of Mind all possibilities are open to us; and when we study its nature we are studying the nature of the Supreme Mind, and are directly conscious of that which has been eternally regnant in Cosmos. Whatever problems are solved by the future, will be solved by consciousness, whether these problems relate to the objective or the subjective world. All possibilities are opened to consciousness, and the possibilities of the Universe are infinite; and among these possibilities, as I hope I have shown, are those of an endless progressive existence in a Universe at whose head is an infinite Mind, of which we are functional parts.”

When the time comes that this new and higher race, to which Professor Gates refers, shall make its appearance upon this planet, or when a new and more truly spiritual consciousness shall be awakened in the race that now is, then indeed it may come to pass that all our present laborious efforts to find evidence for the truth of immortality will seem to be of infinitesimal importance, since man will then possess in his own inner experience the realization that he is an



inseparable part of the Infinite Life of the Universe, that it is not quantity of years but quality of life that really matters, and that all that is truly valuable in him is eternal. What is now the experience of the few, will then be the knowledge of all.

Our idealist sculptor, Lorado Taft, has planned a great sculptural group which is eventually to have its place in Washington Park, Chicago. His Fountain of Time will represent the heroic figure of Time overlooking the vast, hurrying procession of mankind. Out of the central jet of water rise infant forms, who turn their childish footsteps after the youths and maidens that have preceded them. In the center of the long column are warriors and horsemen, strong men and beautiful women, all marching forward with kindling eyes and heads erect. Beyond them are the bending shoulders and halting footsteps of the aged who are just about to sink back to the earth from whence they came. But all, all — the children, the youths, the heroes and the grandsires, every one — are gazing forward intently toward some goal they cannot see. This vision of the Unseen it is that keeps them marching on.

It is not the brief cycle of the body, dust to dust, but this wonderful suggestion of the soul's luminous vision, that will make Lorado Taft's Fountain a work of prophetic and artistic genius when it is finally embodied in the imperishable marble. It is not the dust, rising like transient foam and falling like vanishing spray, but the Spirit in man that endures as seeing that which is invisible; man the unconquerable, man the imperishable, man the eternal explorer, who affirms confidently — I know that Life is evermore the Master of death.

"Time goes, you say; ah, no,  
Thank God, time stays; we go."

We recall how Peter Pan remarked naïvely as the waters of the lagoon crept up his little rock and threatened to sweep

him away, "To die will be an awfully big adventure." It was natural that these words should come spontaneously to the lips of Charles Frohman, the best friend of Peter Pan, on that fateful May afternoon when he stood calmly on the sinking deck of the doomed *Lusitania*. "Why fear death?" he said to the friend who stood beside him; "it is the most beautiful adventure of life."

If this could be our attitude, if we could accustom ourselves to think of death, not as the enemy who takes us out of life, but as one of the great, perhaps the greatest, adventures in life — an adventure that must help to further dispel life's mysteries as we know them here, and solve life's deepest problems, then indeed it would be possible for us all to

"Greet the Unseen with a cheer."

THE END

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